HOW TO
Paint & Draw

TIPS AND INSPIRATION FOR ARTISTS EVERYWHERE

MASTER THE BASICS
Refresh your knowledge of essential art skills

16 PROJECTS INSIDE

IMPROVE YOUR ART

Get the most out of materials and learn the theory behind perfect compositions

LEARN NEW TECHNIQUES

Discover the art of perspective

Use grids and the Golden Ratio

Set up a dedicated art workspace

IN-DEPTH TUTORIALS

Future

ARTISTS TAKE YOU BEHIND THE SCENES AND SHARE THEIR SECRETS

CHOOSE THE RIGHT DRAWING TOOLS

MASTERING PERSPECTIVE

HOW TO PAINT AN ABSTRACT PORTRAIT

HOW TO
Paint & Draw

Welcome

Are you ready to paint and draw? In this special edition from ImagineFX magazine, top artists share their techniques and advice on how to create great art, whether you're using oils, acrylics, watercolours, gouache, pencils, ink or more.

We start on **p6** by refreshing the **fundamentals of drawing and sketching**, from the different ways to grip a pencil to how to draw and combine shapes. From there, we'll lead you through more advanced tips and techniques, from shading to basic anatomy. Then on **p54**, our focus switches to painting, from **setting up a dedicated art workspace** to the secrets of different paints. Are you using the right brushes and paper for the kind of art you wish to create? Find out here.

From **p96**, we delve deeper into art theory, taking a look at **how to use perspective**, the rule of the thirds and the Golden Ratio to bring your art to the next level. Then from **p110**, professsional **artists take you through their projects** and explain how they created them. You'll learn some invaluable tips and secrets along the way. Enjoy!

Tom

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Core skills

HOW TO HOLD A PENCIL CORRECTLY

The first step to improving your drawing is to make sure you're holding your pencil correctly. PAUL TYSALL explains the different methods and what each is used for.

You're fairly sure you know how to hold a pencil, right? Well of course you do… but are you holding it *correctly*? The grip we use for day-to-day writing is very inefficient and will limit you in many drawing scenarios.

Quite simply, drawing from the fingers and wrist alone (which is the narrow range promoted by the standard hand writing grip) doesn't release the full potential of movement that drawing from the entire arm and shoulder affords us.

When it comes to drawing, you need to retrain years of accumulated muscle memory that is dictating the way you make marks. Once you weed out these bad habits, your visual vocabulary will broaden with each drawing session. A better grasp will literally leads to a better grasp, because once you gain greater certainty and control over any given drawing medium the confidence to explore what can be done with it becomes more accessible. Which is why over the page we'll take a brief look at mark making.

Having your memory banks full of a wide range of new and interesting marks furthers your ability to express line, shade/value and texture, the core principles of any drawing. Our aim here is to offer you tips

> ❝ **Drawing from the fingers and wrist alone doesn't release the full potential of movement** ❞

so that you'll have an ingrained understanding on how best to approach a drawing before you make the first mark. Be that a study of a model in a life drawing class or an imagined form in your sketchbook, we want you to feel confident with the drawing tool in your hand.

Over the following pages we'll discuss the benefits of changing the way you hold and control your chosen media so it becomes an extension of your body, demonstrating what certain art tools are capable of once you begin twisting and turning your way to becoming a more articulate (and articulated) artist.

Paul Tysall is an illustrator, graphic designer and writer working in Bristol. See his work at studio_tysall.prosite.com.

12 STEPS TO PENCIL PRECISION
Learn to wield your drawing tool like a pro and start making marks.

1 The two basic types of grip
There are several ways to hold a pencil. Most are variants of two main grip types; Tripod and Overhand. Both can be used when holding different kinds of drawing media, but you may notice a tendency to grip tubular media (pencils and ink pens) with the Tripod grip and bulkier media with the Overhand. Both have their place but the Overhand method is generally considered a more adept approach. Before we explain why lets looks at the Tripod grip.

2 The Tripod grip
The Tripod grip is the grip we use when writing with a pen, so it's also known as the Writing method. You grip using the thumb, index and middle finger. The barrel of the pencil should rest naturally in your hand's web space. Avoid closing the web space, as this forces the barrel to rest on the knuckle of the Index finger and promotes strokes using finger gestures only. Avoid grasping at the tip of the pencil, too: this can limit line length(s) and lead to hairy, less fluid continuous lines.

3 When to use the Tripod grip

Although the range of movement of the Tripod grip is limited, it can be useful for detailing small sections of a big drawing. Try to move your grip as far up the barrel as you can to encourage articulation of the elbow and drawing from the shoulder. The Tripod grip is more appropriately used when working in a small sketchbook, A4 or smaller. Try not to rest your hand on the paper, as this can hinder wrist articulation.

4 The Overhand grip

If you've never used the Overhand grip, it feels alien at first, but the benefits are worth the retraining. You first need to sharpen your pencil in a specific way (see How to Sharpen, right). Place your pencil down on a flat surface. Now with the thumb and all four fingers pick up the pencil. All fingers should grip the outer side of the barrel whilst the thumb grips the opposing side, retaining a light grip at all times.

5 When to use the Overhand grip

Overhand grip combined with a correctly sharpened pencil will increase the versatility and range of marks you can make by introducing the edge of the pencil. Eg, when drawing on a vertical surface (easel) holding the pencil vertically (and with the full edge touching the paper), pulling downwards creates a single line, but moving the edge horizontally left/right will lay down a thicker line of tone.

6 Getting more from the Overhand grip

Move your index finger away from the outer edge of the pencil to the top of the barrel. This enhances your control of the pencil by acting as your pivot and pressure control. Rolling the wrist forwards means less edge is in contact with the surface, leading to a thinner, sharper line weight. Roll back the wrist and you apply more edge to the surface, broadening and also softening the line quality.

7 Overhand grip exercises

Another way to shift line weight is to introduce minor shifts in wrist angle, as you draw a continuous line start to twist the wrist to increase/decrease the amount of edge contact with the surface. To build muscle memory try this exercise: Plot several X's randomly over a surface; now begin linking these X's with lines, some short, others continuous, fluctuating line weights as you go. Use four Xs close together (North, East, South and West) to practice drawing ellipses.

8 Making marks

Gain confidence by exploring the type of marks you can make using this grip. The foundation of every drawing can be broken down into three basic components; line, shade and texture. The more ways you have of creating these, the more varied your drawing vocabulary will become. Marks can be generated by the following factors; direction, angle, speed and pressure. Try filling a sheet of paper with experimental marks that capture these qualities.

HOW TO SHARPEN YOUR PENCIL: PART 1

THE RIGHT DEVICE

You're probably already accustomed to using a hand-held metal pencil sharpener when drawing. This is fine when working in a sketchbook but there are some downsides. The main one is the very small tip. Less tip equals fewer marks you can make, as you don't have an exposed edge for shading and light tone. A smaller tip also requires constant resharpening, hindering productivity.

How you approach sharpening depends on the way, and scale, that you draw. If you like to work small and use a hatching approach, the 'needle' point might be better suited to your approach. If you're doing larger scale drawing, using the Overhand grip to achieve line and shaded tone, use a 'bullet' point. Over the page, we'll show you how to do both...

■ Daler Rowney Soft Putty Rubber
■ Staedtler Mars plastic eraser
■ Daler Rowney Kandahar ink, Black Indian
■ Conté à Paris, Noir 2B

SURFACE
■ Daler Rowney A1 Smooth cartridge, 130 gsm
■ CASS Canford paper - Winter pad, 150 gsm

Drawing

HOW TO SHARPEN YOUR PENCIL: PART 2

THE NEEDLE TIP

Using a craft knife or scalpel, you need to expose about half of an inch worth of tip, by shaving off long incremental pieces of the barrel. Place the blade at a shallow angle, almost flat to the barrel, and push the blade forward using the thumb of the hand holding the pencil. You can also think of this motion as drawing the pencil back down the blade. With each stroke, rotate the barrel to begin shaping an even point. Once you've enough exposed graphite, continue to shape the tip using very light strokes and rolling the pencil quickly. At this point you should also be shaving away small sections of barrel from the base of the tip.

Next, using an emery board or a small section of sandpaper, place the pencil tip flat to the surface. Start to shape the tip by moving the pencil back and forth, rotating the barrel. At first you'll break the tip a lot (both in sharpening and applying marks when drawing). Eventually, though, the deftness required in sharpening like this will become second nature.

9 Shading

How we describe that a subject has form is by applying tone, aka shading. The most common drawing method of shading is to continuously apply overlapping strokes back and forth. Keeping a consistent pressure will result in a single grade of tone. Going from heavily applied marks to a lighter application will result in a tonal gradient.

11 Cross-hatching

Cross-hatching is similar to the Hatching technique (step 10), but a second set of lines are drawn at an angle running across the first set. Again, the more pressure and tighter the marks, the darker the tone – but now you can introduce hatch marks crossing in two or more directions to make denser areas of shade.
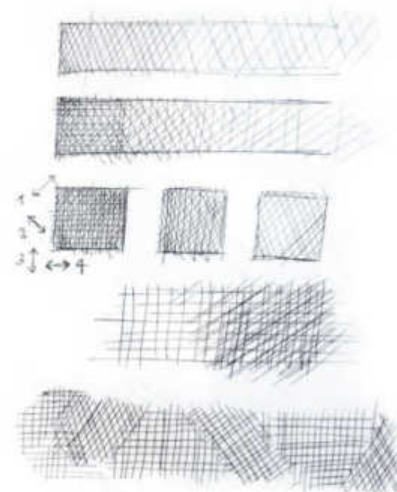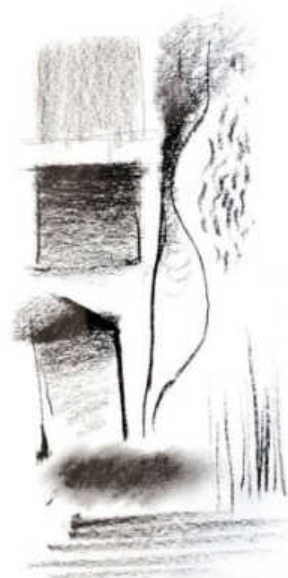
MORE MARKS

3 OTHER WAYS OF MAKING DRAWING MARKS

So far we've only looked at graphite and charcoal pencils, these being the most commonly used drawing tools around, but there are various types of media that can be used to make marks. Each medium has distinct properties and can be manipulated in different ways to generate very unique marks. Here are three more other options found in the life drawing room.
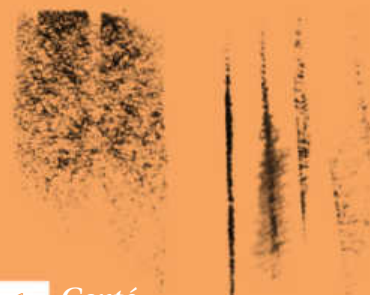
1 Conté

When working with a Conté stick it's vital to level out the edges so all sides make contact with the surface. (This is also a good way to remove the outer protective coating). Hold the stick, using the Overhand grip, flat to your paper and rubbing each side continuously till you get a single line of even tone. Retaining the side edges of the stick leaves you a way to draw thin lines, and the squared ends are good for wider marks. You can also fashion a single stick to a bullet tip (see 'How to Sharpen Your Pencil part 3', above right). Experiment with how you manipulate the Conté from the wrist and shoulder to vary continuous line quality and width.

THE BULLET TIP
As with the needle tip approach, the first part of getting a bullet shape is to expose the media from the barrel, but this time avoid shaping the exposed tip. You're looking to reveal about an inch of media, with a smooth taper from wood to tip. Using your sandpaper, begin shaping the tip moving the pencil forwards and backwards across the surface. Remember to constantly roll the barrel: you're after a smooth all-round cylindrical finish with no edges to the tip. Getting the bullet shape is made by rocking the wrist forwards and back, focusing on the top third of the tip.

When you use sandpaper to sharpen pencils you end up with excess powder on the tip. If you don't remove this, it can make its way to the paper and ruin a drawing. A few quick blows on the tip along with a quick wipe (your T-shirt or jeans usually being the closest cloth to hand) should be the last stage of sharpening before returning to the drawing.

PENCIL TIP
SHARPENING TECHNIQUE
As you draw you can also prolong the lifespan of the tip by rolling the pencil barrel on a regular basis, so you don't favour one side of the tip which can weaken it

10 Hatching
Hatching is a method of shading that uses a series of parallel lines: either vertical, horizontal or following the direction of the planes of the form (contour shading). For lighter tones, line weights must be thin, soft and spaced. To darken the image, apply more pressure to lines and place them closer together; overlapping your lines also works.

12 Stippling
You can also suggest tone by creating a series of dots on your surface. Use a thicker, softer pencil, like a charcoal or Conté. Tap the point to build up an array of marks. To suggest lighter areas of tone, the dots should be appropriately spaced and small in size. To create darker areas, the dots become larger and should form a dense cluster.

2 Charcoal
Whether you're using charcoal sticks or pencils, the favoured grip is the Overhand, as moving from line to tone is as simple as changing the direction of your strokes. As with Conté charcoal is highly pigmented, especially the compressed variants. This makes blending with your finger or a stump an effective toning practice. Note that when blending with your finger, the oils from your skin can bond the pigment to the surface, making erasing difficult. Use paper stumps to avoid this.

3 Ink: Pen and Wash
How you approach ink is largely determined by the drawing apparatus: graphic pens are limited in mark quality yet render consistent lines for cross-hatching.

Try experimenting with 'dip' pens, changing the nibs to alter width and line. Reed pens can be a lot of fun as you can shape different tips using a craft knife for more varied, natural-feeling marks. Both dip and reed pens require loading with ink: if you use a water-soluble ink this can used to wash areas of tone with a wet brush. Plus an old toothbrush can be used to splatter ink (to create texture) by drawing your thumb through the inked bristles. Working in ink can be a little daunting when starting out, but see the inability to quickly erase lines as part of the challenge.

Core skills

HOW TO DRAW BASIC SHAPES

The complex world around us can be divided into simple shapes. Learn how to draw them accurately and your artwork will take off, PAUL TYSALL explains.

Breaking any process down into small chunks is a great way to tackle what can seem like a daunting task. When it comes to drawing, if we break a subject down into simple shapes we can begin to describe its overall structure.

In the opening stages of a drawing you should be looking to describe your subject, and its environment, in very simple terms: always avoid details too early on. By drawing with simple shapes we can focus on proportions, composition, planes and the relationships between forms. It's all about working big down to small; simple to complex; basic shapes to crafted details.

There are three basic shape archetypes that any form can be fitted into; the cube, the cylinder and the sphere. At the heart of these form shapes are two simple geometric shapes; the square and the ellipse.

Learning to accurately draw and combine these will help you to construct any object, observed or imagined. In walking you through this process we will have to deal with concepts like perspective and foreshortening, so we'll take a very brief, practical look at them, but to get a fuller understanding of Perspective head to page 102, and for more on foreshortening read the Artist Tip on page 13.

> 66 **Any form can be fitted into one of three basic shape archetypes: the cube, the cylinder and the sphere** 99

We'll start with drawing the square, leading onto the cube – the most articulate shape when it comes to describing geometry in a drawing that has perspective.

Having six basic planar faces, the cube's proportions help to echo their relationship within 3D space. This aids further description of more complex rectilinear, cylindrical and curvilinear forms, which is what we'll cover on page 16.

You might think that drawing simple shapes is… well, simple. But don't be fooled. It takes immense skill to perfect drawing freehand shapes like a simple circle: just ask Giotto. The 13th century Italian painter secured his patronage from Pope Boniface VIII based solely on his simple painting of a freehand circle…

MATERIALS

MEDIA
- ■ Derwent Graphic 2B graphite pencil
- ■ Derwent Charcoal pencil, Dark
- ■ Swann-Morton scalpel
- ■ Staedtler Mars technico clutch pencil, 2mm 2B graphite
- ■ Daler Rowney Soft Putty Rubber
- ■ Staedtler Mars plastic eraser

SURFACE
- ■ Daler Rowney A1 Smooth cartridge, 130 gsm.
- ■ DCASS Canford paper, Winter pad, 150 gsm

2D SHAPES TO 3D CUBES
Start with simple squares and build up to cubes and cyclinders.
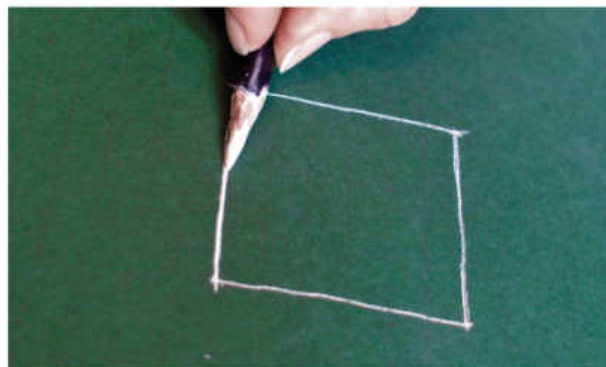
1 How to draw a square
Drawing a basic square is the simple connection of four straight lines, two along the horizontal axis and two to describe the vertical axis. Drawing these lines is all about living in the future: pinpoint your start point; imagine the end point. Place your pencil on the start point, relax and focus on the end point. Pull your mark along the imagined path removing the pencil once it reaches the end point. Pull your lines towards their goal: this uses more adept muscle groups.
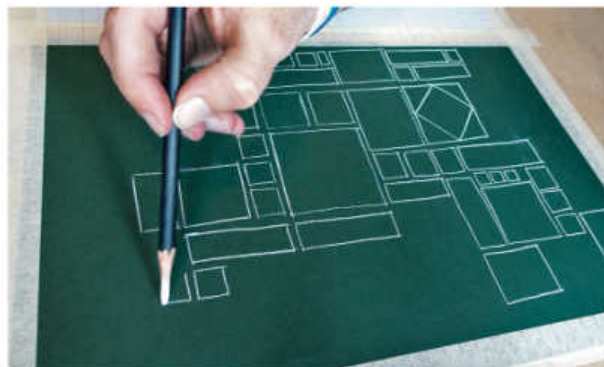
2 Squared exercise
The grip shown here is one we're all accustomed to using when writing. Grip using the thumb, index and middle finger. The barrel of the pencil should rest naturally in your hand's web space. Avoid closing the web space, as this forces the barrel to rest on the knuckle of the Index finger and promotes strokes using finger gestures only. Avoid grasping at the tip of the pencil, as this can limit line length(s) and lead to less fluid, continuous lines.

ORTHOGRAPHIC VIEW

ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE

TWO-POINT PERSPECTIVE

FIND THE CENTRE POINT OF THE SQUARE

THEN MAKE QUADRANTS

FIND THE CENTRE POINT OF EACH QUADRANT
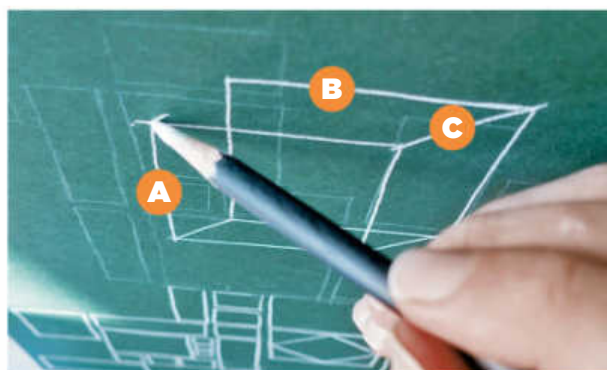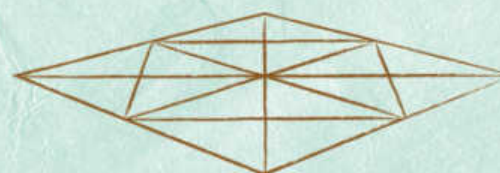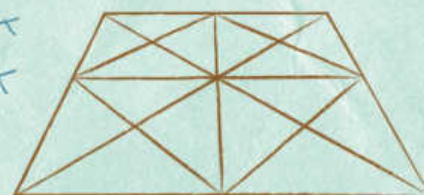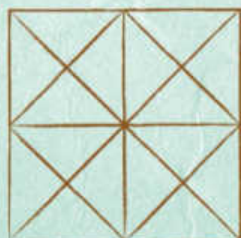
3 Beginnings of a cube

Using the simple square as a starting point [A], begin to describe a box in 3D space. Draw another square that overlaps the first [B]. Connect all the corners of one square to the adjacent corners of the other, using 45º lines [C]. This process of showing all six sides of the cube is known as 'drawing through', and here it highlights a problem with this oblique drawing of a cube: it's an impossible shape in nature. For a cube seen in nature we need to apply perspective...
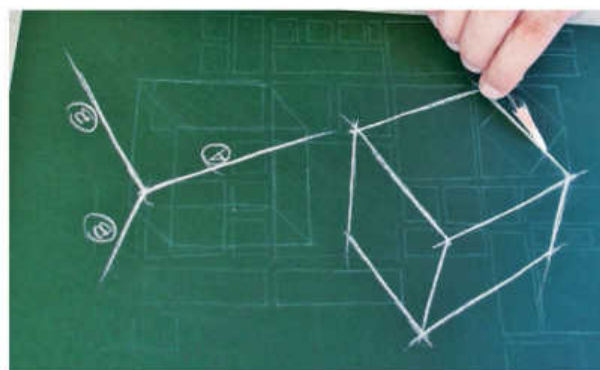
4 How to draw more natural cubes

When you first start drawing cubes, it helps to study with an object in front of you. The first line to go down is the vertical line closest to you [A]. The next two lines are for the inside edges [B]. These start at the top of our first stroke as we're looking down at our cube and the top plane is visible. The degree at which the inside edge lines are drawn depends on how much top plane we can see: if it's a lot, the lines are drawn at an acute angle, for less, a more obtuse angle.

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Drawing

5 Finishing your cube

The length and angle of the inside edges depends on how much of the front and side is on show. If both are equal, the angle and length of the inside edge lines are also equal. Turn the front face more towards you and the line gets longer, the angle more horizontal. This turning creates the opposite; the line is more vertical, shorter. To finish, go to the end of each line and join the remaining edges with converging lines.
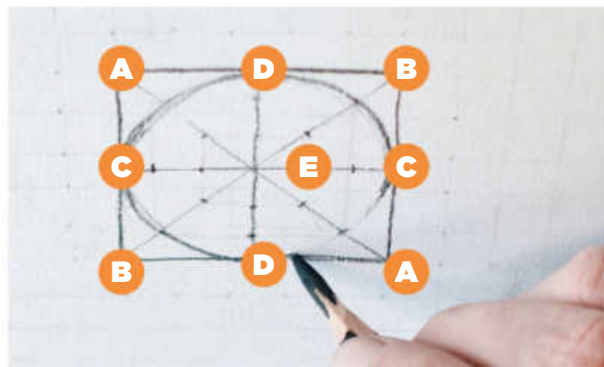
6 How to draw a circle

Measure out a square using a ruler. From the top left corner, draw a line [A] to the bottom right. Draw a second from top right to lower left [B]. Add two centre lines, [C] and [D]. On the eight short lines going out from the centre, plot dots at incremental thirds [E]. Now draw your circle tangent to the sides of the square and using the plot points placed two thirds from the centre. 'Ghost draft' this to practice first.

DRAWING ON GRAVITY

USE YOUR BODY
On p6-9 we learned the importance of using the whole arm, including the shoulder, to draw lines, especially when you're working on larger scale drawings. Things don't end there, though. It's important that you understand the entire body is utilised in some way when drawing, especially when it comes to 'pulling' your marks across the surface (as mentioned in step 1: Drawing a square). You can maintain a greater degree of control when you draw lines from outside the body in towards your body's centre mass (the gut), and keeping the drawing arm closer to the body's core promotes better muscle control too. Even shifting your weight from one leg to the other can help pull a long line down across a drawing when standing at an easel.
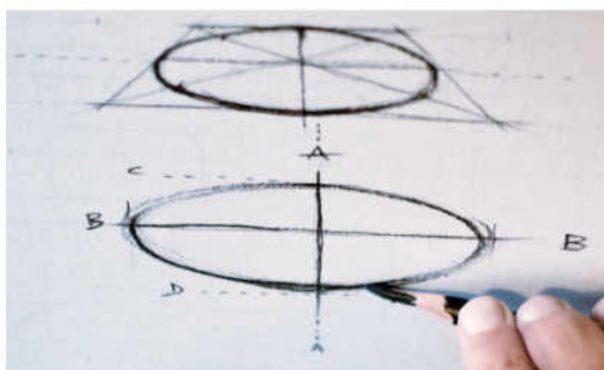
7 How to draw an ellipse

To draw a circle that appears tilted in perspective (an ellipse) repeat step 6 but this time start with a square drawn on an imaginary angled plane. You can simplify this process by drawing two lines dissecting each other, one short and vertical [A], the other horizontal and longer [B]. Now plot end points. Those on the horizontal line should be equal in distance from the centre.

8 Complete your ellipse

Once again it's about connecting these points with a curvilinear path. But this time the upper semi-circle [A] is more foreshortened than the lower arc [B]. Practise this process small at first, just to build up your confidence – then move onto larger ellipses, which require more gestural arm and shoulder movements. It takes a lot of training to draw accurate ellipses.

9 How to draw a cylinder

You first need to determine your cylinder's size and orientation in 3D space. Draw an angled line measured to express its length in depth [A]. Introduce a line that runs parallel to it to determine the cylinder's width [B]. These two lines should be tapering to an imagined far off point to express any foreshortening that's occurring. The shape of both end ellipses depends on your viewing angle; in both cases the angle of each is perpendicular to the established sides.

10 Complete your cylinder

Your ellipses should run perpendicular to your edge lines; knowing this helps you avoid 'squished' cylinders, a common issue when using horizontal ellipses to cap the ends of angled cylinders. Applying this rule will also help you describe cross contour lines accurately. When you need to add a cross contour line to a cylinder, lightly 'draw through' the entire ellipse in question, this helps maintain the curved ends found when the visible line connects to the form edges.
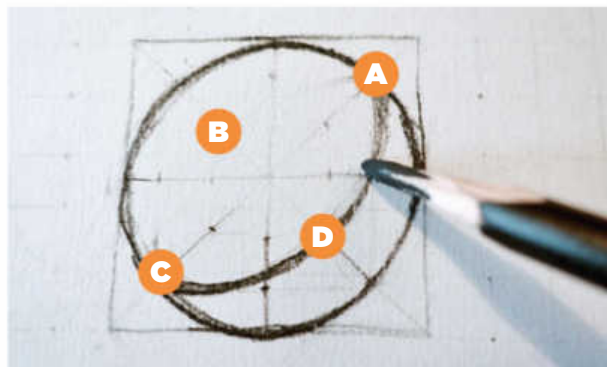
11 *How to draw a sphere*

We can express spherical form using cross contour lines. Repeat step 6, but take it further by creating an ellipse within the circle. Starting at [A], lightly draw a curve with a trajectory that passes through the first third-from-centre plot point [B] then follows around to the opposite edge [C], continuing through to the next third-from-centre [D] point, ending where it began [A]. Erase the upper or lower arc.
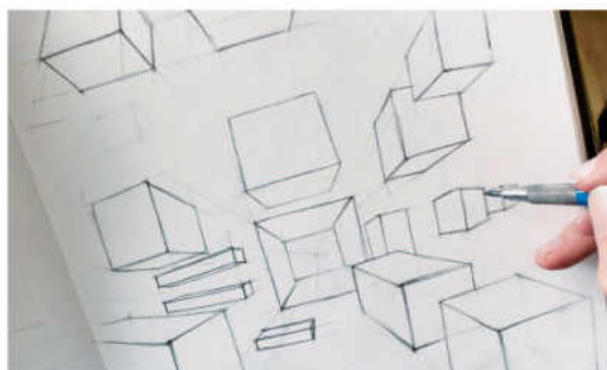
12 *Cube exercise*

Draw a horizontal line across your surface, this will act as your eye line or imaginary horizon line. Draw a square directly in the centre (note no sides should be visible). Now, above the horizon line and off to the right, draw a cube as if you'd picked up the centre square and moved it up and to the right. Your goal is to populate the paper with 3D cubes as seen from various angles.
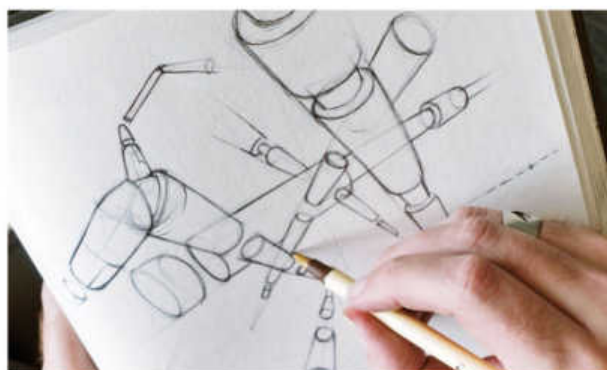
13 *Cylinder exercise*

Establish a horizon line, then draw a plumb line directly down the centre of your paper. From the converging centre point, draw a set of diagonal lines reaching outwards mimicking the length and width lines [A & B] from step 9, and cap it off with an ellipse. As this first cylinder started life at a single point (the vanishing point) we've actually drawn a tiny cone. Now continue to draw more cylinders, continuing along the established perspective plane.
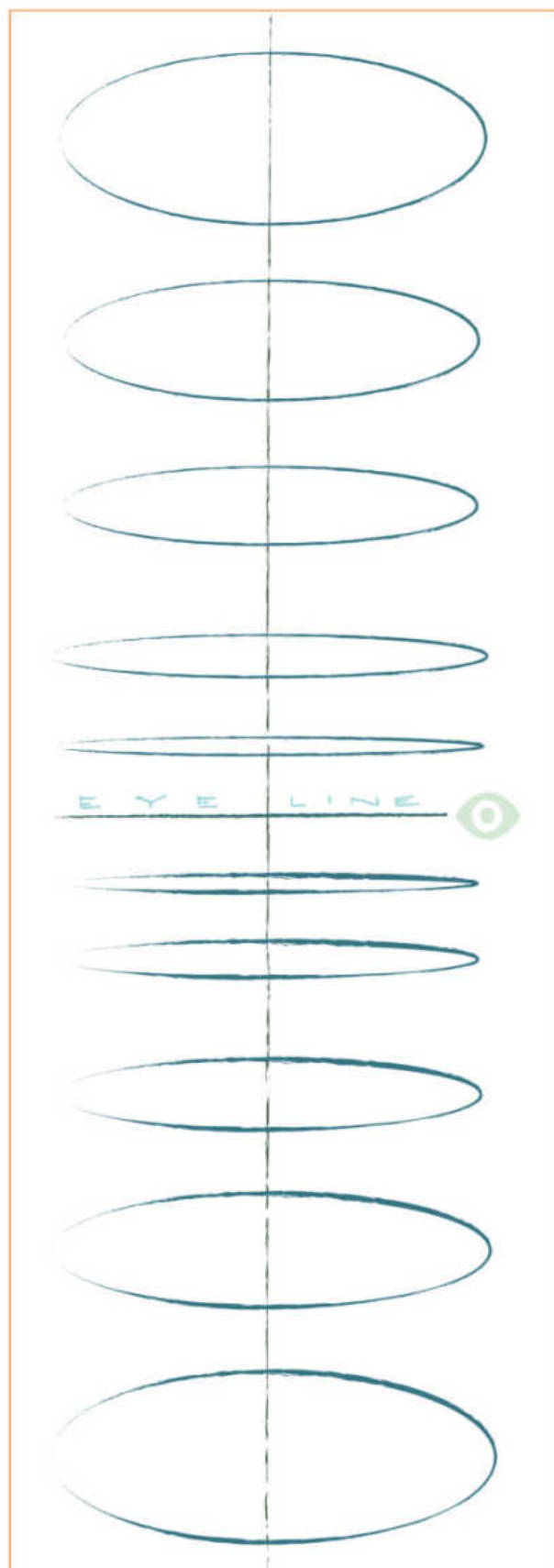
PERSPECTIVE TIPS

ELLIPSES IN PERSPECTIVE GUIDE
The amount of distortion that occurs in a circular form is dictated by the eye level. Ellipses become more foreshortened the closer they get to eye level, so an ellipse in contact with the ground appears rounder. When the ellipse is directly on the eye level we are only seeing its edge: in 2D drawing terms this becomes a line.

Core skills

COMBINE SHAPES TO MAKE OBJECTS

Now you've mastered drawing simple shapes, PAUL TYSALL explains how to apply that skill to reproducing real world objects, in the form of still-life drawings.

By now you already know the importance of breaking forms down into simple shapes. Not only does this make the whole drawing process easier to manage but it also ensures that proportions and foreshortening remain accurate throughout the rendering stages by establishing them correctly early on in the drawing.

On the following pages, we're going to explain how to combine different shapes to create objects. I'm going to kick things off with a studio-based, still-life scene.

A still-life affords us the luxury of dictating what we study (if you struggle to draw certain objects try adding them to your still-life for practice) and the angle we view them at, plus the lighting in the scene – something that can be tricky to control with an outdoors landscape.

In this instance I've opted to draw some rather complicated objects to help illustrate how their forms can easily be broken down at the start of a drawing into very basic shapes.

However, you might want to start with objects that are, by design, closer to the simple geometric forms used when constructing a drawing – for example: bottles, fruit and man-made packaging.

> ❝ **Complicated objects can easily be broken down at the start of a drawing into very basic shapes** ❞

Then we'll take to our sketchbooks for a spot of open-air drawing, looking at two different settings that are really going to push how we deconstruct them into geometric forms: urban and nature.

Although we're mainly working within urban surroundings, man-made forms like architecture being a lot easier to understand in geometric terms, it's important we get some nature in there too – after all, no one does complexity quite like mother nature.

Nature landscape studies help you to see geomorphology as interconnected abstract shapes emerging from planes. Trees can be described as cylinders or sometimes cones, and petrologic surfaces can be expressed using merged cubes or ellipses.

Enough talk, let's get drawing!

ALL SCENES ARE MADE OF SHAPES
Discover how the most complex compositions can be broken down into geometric shapes

1 *Collect some objects*
When setting up a still-life, it really helps to think about the objects you're placing in the scene. Here, I'm using an artist's skull. Practising skulls will help improve your portraiture work no end, the skull being the foundation of a person's facial features. Adding fabric is great for learning how to describe the way clothing folds and hangs.

2 *Compose your still-life*
Researching classical still-life paintings will help you understand how to construct a still-life scene. When you place and arrange objects for the purpose of drawing, you're effectively learning composition, which can imbue an image with narrative and hierarchy. If your drawing is going to be shaded, always plan out light source placement.

STUDY CLASSICS
Drawing from a studio still-life set up is an invaluable way to practice your composition skills, in nature we rarely have the opportunity to move and arrange objects in the same way we do in the studio. Instead we have to look for these pleasing arrangements and position ourselves accordingly. The best way to learn what makes a good still-life arrangement is to do a tonal study from classical paintings. Gather 10 to 15 examples of good still-life paintings, preferably from artists you admire – 16th century Dutch and Flemish art has plenty to choose from. Using a medium like charcoal or Conté start to replicate the painted objects in silhouetted form, restrict yourself to three or four tones only, working very small on a piece of A4. Remember this isn't about recreating what you see as an accurate drawing, it's a study. You are studying the arrangement, the shape relationships, the use of light and shade – so that when you come to assemble your own still-life, you have a rich mental library to call upon.

3 Make a mental checklist
Make a mental checklist of the objects and how you plan to represent them as simple geometric forms and shapes. Get familiar with the form relationships and negative spaces. The first shape we establish is the glass vase (back right), a very basic rectilinear shape.

4 A shoe = two cuboids
The vase helps to act as a base value that establishes proportions and perspective. We grow the rest of the drawing from this object: the length of the horizontal shoe (centre) is two and half instances of the vase's closest top edge. As a geometric form the shoe is two merged cuboids.

5 Plushy = sphere + cone + cylinders
The toy's head is made from a large elliptical sphere; the body is almost conical, cylinders at its side for the limbs. The coffee tin and thermos are the most cylindrical shapes. Note the ellipses that form both top planes aren't so far from one another but our viewing angle creates a noticeable shift.

6 Define your details
With enough construction lines and shapes lightly pencilled in, it's time to begin defining details. We start out with a Light charcoal pencil to flesh out the forms, working up to Medium and Dark charcoal for more accurate lines. At this stage, make sure you don't overwork your lines.

Drawing

USING ERASERS

CAREFUL DOES IT

Making mistakes is a part of the drawing process. Knowing the best way to make a mark is countered by knowing the best way to remove it. When it comes to drawing, go with a putty rubber for faint marks. It can also be kneaded to a point, making it handy for removing small details or hatching into shaded areas. For more stubborn marks, go with the harder plastic erasers, although overuse can attack the integrity of your surface so don't overdo it. Sometimes it's more refreshing to go with your mistakes though and leave them in your drawing. You'll end up with a less than accurate outcome, but it could foster a more original approach in your artwork.
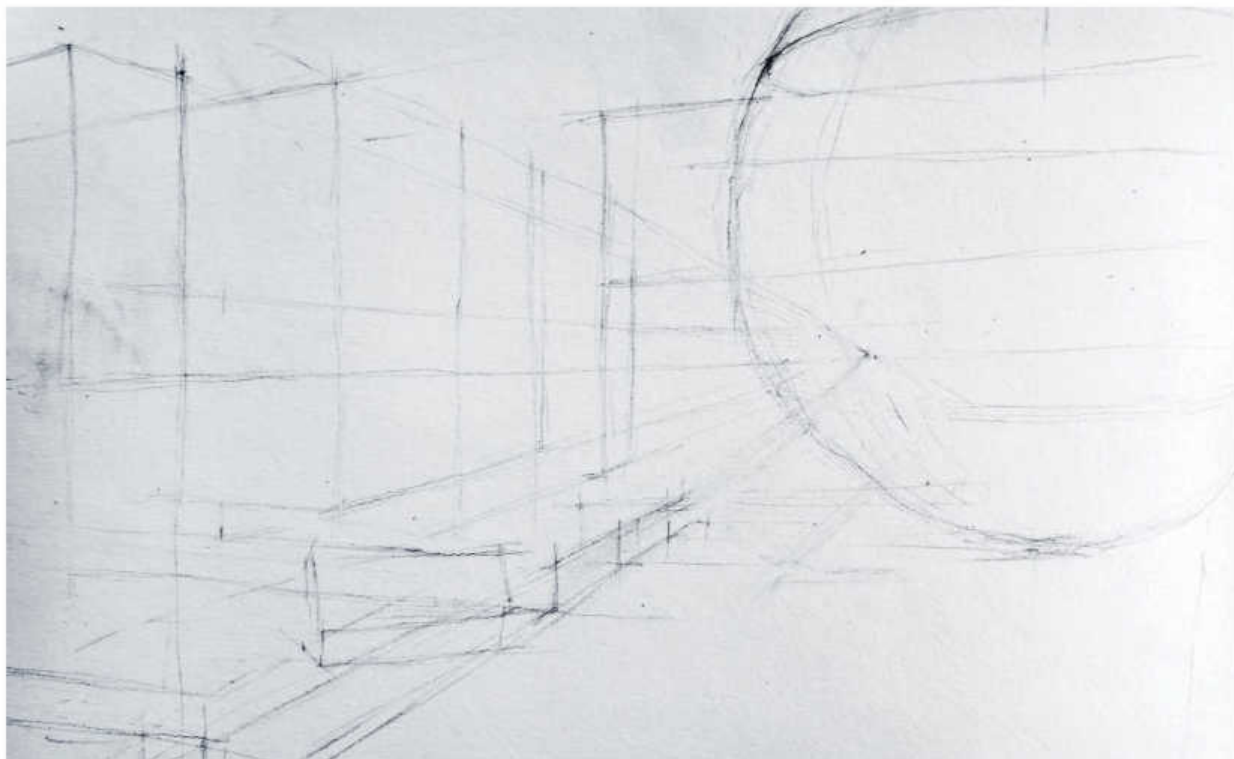
7 Shapes into sculptures

We picked this location (outside @Bristol science centre) based on the large spherical structure found outside the main building. The square is filled with unusual sculptures, bronze statues and water features: a very inspiring space with plenty of geometric forms.

8 Suggesting forms

Once the eye line is indicated with a horizontal line crossing the page, the background buildings are established; think of these as large cubes. Avoid details like windows at this stage. Then the large spherical structure is added: due to its size and proximity, it's closer to a circle than it is elliptical.

9 Start sketching with ink

It's time to flesh out the details with the ink Pitt pen. Drawing with ink is also about confidence, which is why we avoided details at the pencil stage. A few cross contour lines indicate the circle is in fact a large sphere. Suggesting the glass panels also emphasises its overall shape.

10 Add details to enhance forms

A main focal point is added to the centre of the composition. This sculpture is a metal tree with solar panels for leaves: good practice for drawing rectilinear forms at varying angles. Look for details that help echo perspective and the larger structures from your initial construction lines.
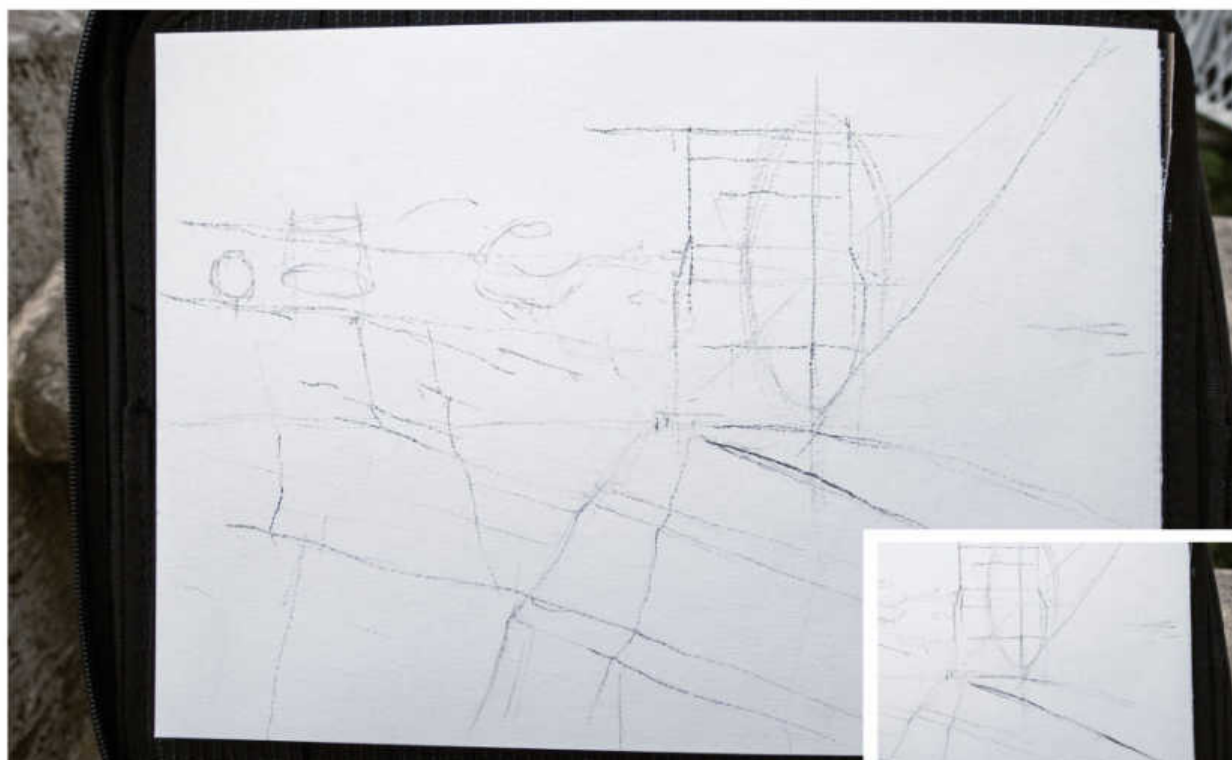
11 Shapes into architecture

This next landscape combines architecture and nature: the Clifton suspension bridge. The main tower (see insert) was under protective sheeting which actually simplifies the overall shape, mimicking the way we should approach forms at the start of a drawing.

12 Draw structure as outline

The tower is comprised of intersecting rectilinear forms. The deck appears as a foreshortened cuboid: we'll maintain this throughout the rendering stages as it provides a strong perspective path to draw the viewer into our main focal points; the tower and the park in the background.

USING NEGATIVE SPACE

TRICK THE BRAIN

When artists use the term negative space they are simply referring to the shapes created between objects in a composition, or between adjacent parts of a single object. Our brain's tendency is to ignore negative spaces as it is more concerned with perceiving the object(s) before it. Negative spaces can help us construct a 2D drawing. By seeing the abstract outline of a negative space and comparing it to the same shape in our drawing, we can start to see where mistakes may be occurring.

13 Look for negative spaces

We also indicated a negative ellipse to achieve the curve of the two main cables, though this was to help with establishing the lowest dipping point; as the cable gets closer to us, it detaches from the ellipse. The trees are a mix of cones and ellipses merging together.

14 Make shapes look more natural

We've gone from staggered cuboids, like steps, to more natural looking shapes to illustrate the rock faces. The rock faces are layered planes, so we connect the diagonal lines with (almost) vertical contour lines to indicate changes in depth. Line weight is more relaxed; thick to thin.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT DRAWING TOOLS

Different pencils suit different styles of drawing, and there's other equipment you need too. Here we explain how to choose the best materials for your toolkit.

Whether you're doing quick sketches and layouts, or highly realistic pencil renderings, graphite is a wonderful way to produce a variety of different looks. But buying the right pencil for your needs is largely a question of trial and error.

When first becoming acquainted with using pencils for artwork, we'd recommend buying one of each grade from 9H-9B to become familiar with the hard/light and soft/dark qualities of each.

Experiment with various surfaces, and a wide variety of strokes and mark-making (see pages 8-12 for more on that).

BLEND AND SHARPEN
After gaining an understanding of the abilities and limitations of each pencil, you can then investigate further with blending tools and erasers for different effects.

A blending tool can be anything you can use to add texture to your graphite marks. The most obvious tool you have already to hand: your fingers! Other blending tools you can potentially use include tortillions, blending stumps, paper, cloth, cotton wool, make-up wipes, chamois, paper towels, paper tissue, paintbrushes, and probably a dozen other things we haven't thought of.

Be warned, though: attempting the use of blending tools too early can look smudgy and amateurish, so don't rush into this.

You also need to keep your pencils sharp. And while a pencil sharpener is fine when you're just using a pencil to write with, for drawing we'd suggest you're better off using a scalpel or craft knife. We explain the best ways to sharpen pencils for drawing purposes on pages 9-12.

If you're just starting out you'll no doubt want to stick with the familiar. **Graphite pencils** are the most common type used for drawing as their composition allows for the smoothest strokes. Once you grow in confidence, though, it's time to start widening your scope.

For instance, you could try **solid graphite pencils**. These are solid sticks of graphite and clay composite (as found in a graphite pencil), which have no casing other than a wrapper or label.

Often called **woodless pencils**, they're used primarily for art purposes, as the lack of casing allows for covering larger spaces more easily, creating different effects.

CHARCOAL
Then there are **charcoal pencils**. As the name suggests, these are made of charcoal and provide fuller blacks than graphite pencils, but tend to smudge easily and are more abrasive than graphite. Sepia-toned and white pencils are also available for duotone techniques.

"I use charcoal because it's a versatile tool that produces a variety of effects, from thin lines to bold strokes," says Jean-Sébastien Rossbach, an award-winning illustrator, concept artist and painter. However, he adds a word of warning: as with blending tools, "those just starting out can find it tricky to control, with the results often looking messy."

You can see some results of charcoal being used alongside graphite in both our shading tutorial on page 28 and our lighting tutorial on page 30.

INK AND PASTELS
Of course, drawing isn't just about pencils: drawing with ink is another popular medium that can lead to some beautiful results.

Traditional pen and ink consists of black ink and white paper, creating space through thick or thin lines, repeating marks for texture.

There are many options for working in ink so, just as with graphite, you'll need to find which best suits you by experimenting. We look in more detail at how to draw using ink on page 20.

If you want your drawing to feature vibrant colours then you'll probably want to investigate **pastels**.

Pastels are a great medium for producing colourful artwork easily, with no need for water, brushes or palettes.

The main types of pastels are soft and hard pastels, oil pastels, pastel pencils and water soluble pastels.

We look in more detail at how to get started with pastels on page 20.

GO FURTHER
And that's not all! You can also try using **carbon pencils**, which produce a fuller black than graphite pencils, but are smoother than charcoal.

There are **grease pencils,** which write on almost any surface including glass, plastic, metal and photos.

Plus there are **watercolour pencils**, designed for use with watercolour techniques. (They can also be used by themselves for sharp, bold lines).

In short, there's a world of different drawing implements out there. So start trying different tools, and don't hold back!

> ❝ **Attempting the use of blending tools too early can look smudgy and amateurish** ❞

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Illustrator Terese Nielsen explains how to pick your paper, pencils and more.

Bristol board plate finish

Linen texture paper

Eggshell mat board

Cameo surface etching with razor blade

Many types of Coquille board textures
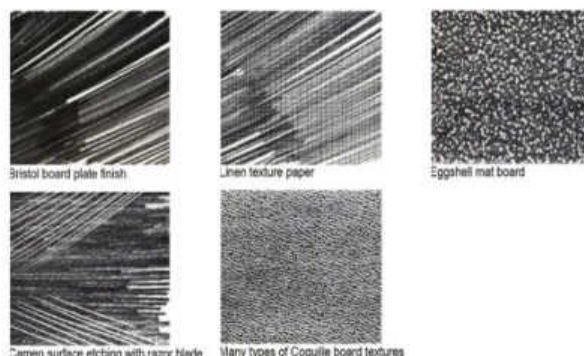
1 *Choose the right grade*

Pencils are graded on a scale from H (hardness) to B (blackness). Generally a 2-4H pencil is as hard as one needs for light areas, an H-B is for midrange, and a 5B-6B is for dark areas. Rather than switching pencils for each tone, experiment with altering the pressure. Brands vary, so experiment to see what suits your temperament.

2 *Choose the right paper*

As much as pencil choice requires careful consideration, the paper you choose is going to be equally significant. If attempting to create a highly realistic style, for example, you could try using a smooth, hot press/plate finish surface. We prefer Arches 140 lb hot press watercolour paper or Bristol Board plate finish.
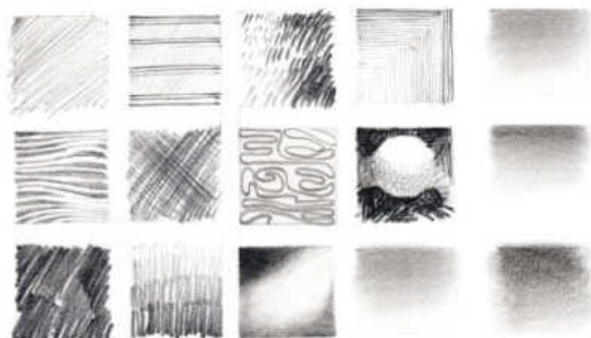
3 *Try some strokes*

Many strokes can be employed to indicate textures of various objects. If you're attempting a highly realistic style then use very small circular strokes with your pencil; otherwise unwanted banding of pencil marks occurs. Try shading with a variety of tools from blending stumps to paper tissue for better finishes.

4 *Blending stumps*

Blending stumps are made from tightly wound paper, formed into a stick and sanded at both ends to create points. Used ideally to create gradations and half-tones, the sanded area is ideal for blending while the point (ideally kept clean) is best used to blend light-toned areas. Unlike fingers, blending stumps leave no oily smears.

5 *Blending tortillons*

Blending tortillons are made from rolled, loose-fibre paper and are pointed at one end. The softer paper texture of blending tortillons gives a different blending texture to stumps, and they can be used to push colour and soften pencil edges.

6 *Kneaded eraser*

Unlike standard office erasers, kneaded erasers are dry and don't smudge or leave flaked residue. Their softness makes them ideal on sketching paper with a lot of 'tooth'. These erasers can also be formed into points for picking out highlights in eyes and hair.

CHAMOIS

NO STREAKS
These small leather pieces are ideal for blending, but can be expensive from art shops. Instead, buy a large piece of chamois from a car care store, soak it in washing detergent overnight and then rinse in clean water in a washing machine to remove the oils. Many things can be used to blend, so long as they're dry and soft, and don't contain oils or chemicals. You could try cotton buds, paper towels and make-up applicators.

Core skills

START DRAWING WITH INK

Pencils are not the only drawing medium. We explain what ink has to offer the artist and how to get more out of this versatile medium.

Drawing with ink is a big step up from drawing with graphite. The most obvious difference is that there's no more relying on the eraser, but it can be a wonderfully creative medium. Here's how to get started...

Traditional pen and ink consists of black ink and white paper, creating space through thick or thin lines, repeating marks for texture.

Ink drawing techniques can be as delicate or bold, as your temperament dictates: it's all about trying things out.

First of all, pour your ink in an inkwell high enough so that when the nib touches the bottom, it covers three-quarters of the nib. Start with the focal point, working your way back and out to the less-important elements.

Grip the pen close to the tip and keep the angle of the pen at about 45 degrees. Your main subject should feature bold, heavy lines and should have the greatest detail and contrast.

Strokes generally start close to your body and move outward. Use your arm and shoulder, not just your wrist.

SENSE OF CONTROL

"Pen and ink has always been my favourite medium," enthuses Canada-based artist Socar [see some of her inspiring work on the right, and at www.gorblimey.com]. "Not only is it conveniently cheap, but I like everything about it, from the way it gives me precise control over every dot and whorl, to the feel of the nib as it scratches the tooth of the paper."

Socar likes to draw things that can be found in the great Canadian outdoors, like birds, flowers, lost trinkets, roots and trees, garbage and pedestrians. "I like to sketch on tracing paper," she says. "Because it's translucent, I can combine elements from several sketches into one, or move them around to experiment with composition. Tracing paper is also one of the cheapest papers, so it's okay to waste some."

Her tips for working in ink include the following: "Always cover the areas of the drawing you're not currently working on. This cuts down on ink spatter damage, and keeps your skin oils off the page. Use tape to hold the cover paper in place.

"Also remember that you can always add more ink, but you can't take any away. When you want a subtle texture, like the one I've used on the birds' wings, start light and build up slowly.

Finally, she adds: "The heavier the tooth of your paper, the more its texture will show. Use smoother paper for greater precision."

COMIC ART

One of the best known uses of ink by professionals is in comic act, which is where Andy Brase works.

Known for his creature, character and cover illustrations, he's worked on Daredevil, Swamp Thing and Assassin's Creed, as well as book covers for George RR Martin, and his own artbook/sketchbook, Exorcism [www.facebook.com/andybraseart].

"I'm often asked what tools I use to ink my art," he says. "Most of my detailed works are done with Sakura Micron Pens. Long ago, when I started inking, I used Rapidograph technical pens, but they started leaking and required a lot of cleaning, so I switched."

EQUIPMENT

"Microns don't require any cleaning up afterwards," Andy continues, "and they also have more of a flexible tip than some technical pens.

"Sometimes I use an opaque white ink with a brush to make small corrections, break up lines, or add splatters and stars. I'm a big fan of Winsor & Newton's White Ink.

"Sakura Micron Brush pens are a good and quick way to make small ink fills. For big fills, such as a black background, I break out the brush and ink."

There's no 'right answer' to what to use, of course: it's all about what kind of art you want to create. "So if you're new to drawing with ink, it's always good to try out some different tools and see what works best for you," he recommends.

His tip for anyone drawing with ink: "Test your pens on a separate practice sheet beforehand, to make sure the ink is flowing properly when you work on the drawing."

Andy adds: "Develop your style over time – don't be too concerned about your style of inking. Style will build naturally when you're creating your art."

> 66 **Strokes start close to your body and move outward. Use your arm and shoulder, not just your wrist** 99

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Illustrator Terese Nielsen explains to choose the right equipment and materials.
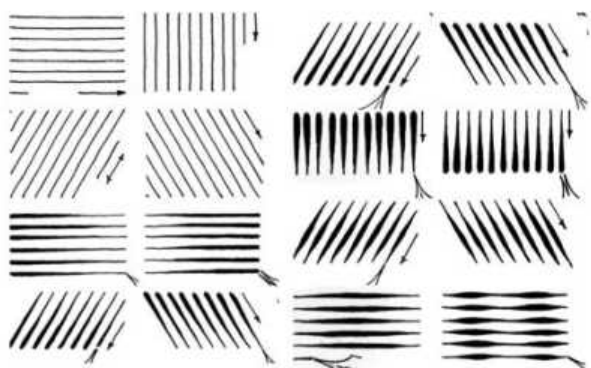
1 Tools

There are many options for working in pen/ink, so find which best suits your temperament by experimenting with different tools. Take time to develop your dexterity in pen handling by doing exercises. Learn sweeping strokes, bold lines, crisp dashes, delicate dots, curves and straight lines. Be able to do this vertically, horizontally and slantwise.

2 Preliminaries

There are several approaches for laying out a sketch before using pen. Sketch with an HB pencil and erase only after the pen work is dry. Comic book and manga artists often use non-photo blue pencils. Alternatively, lightly sketch with a light-warm, grey PITT pen, or sketch with light washes of ink thinned with water.
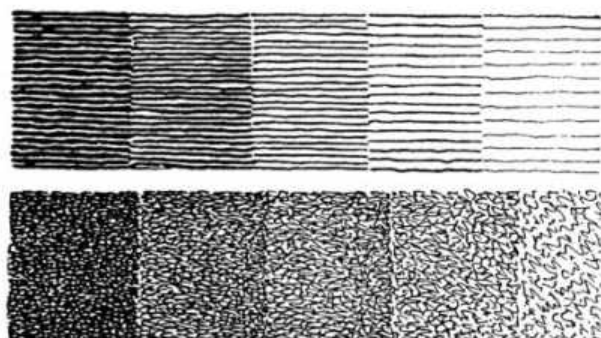
3 Tone and texture

Conveying tone and the idea of texture is done with the type of stroke, or the spacing of strokes, whether wider apart or broken up. Each will have its own peculiar feel. With practice, you learn to use tonal line directions and textures to add points of interest, such as a rhythmic sweep or applying tiny differences in the direction and line weight.

4 Choose your ink, pen and nib

Unless you plan to create subtle washes with a brush, we'd recommend you use waterproof drawing ink. When it comes to pen and nib, crow quills offer great nuances in lines, from extremely fine to quite wide marks. They require dipping into ink, though, and can be messy. Wipe the nibs off every 10 minutes to keep a clean ink flow.

5 Brushes and brush pens

Brushes are preferred by many artists because of the line control that can be achieved. Press down to create thick fat lines or lift almost off the page to create tiny, thin lines. Sizes 1-3 provide great variety. Alternatively, brush pens are a convenient option and require no dipping.

6 Fine-point pens

Fine point pens produce hard, solid lines. Some artists prefer them to the soft curved strokes of a brush, but they lack the line variation that crow quills and brushes/brush pens offer, often creating a more mechanical, less expressive drawing.

WHAT PAPER SHOULD I USE?

DON'T BE CHEAP
Use a smooth, high-quality paper. Cheap papers bleed and don't hold up to erasing or scraping with a knife. With practice, kid-finished Bristol Board can add textural interest, but can cause metal tips to skip and stub, too.

Core skills

START DRAWING WITH PASTELS

Pastels let you produce vibrant colour with the ease of drawing with pencils. There are many different types: here's what they are and how to get the best from them.

Pastels produce vibrant colours with the ease and control of a pencil. In use by artists for centuries, they're an especially portable medium, enabling you to create colourful art with no need for water, brushes or palettes.

DEFINITIONS

But first, what exactly is a pastel? The definition isn't completely clear, and there's been some debate within art societies as to what exactly qualifies as a pastel.

The Pastel Society within the UK, however, states the following media are acceptable for its exhibitions: "Pastels, including Oil pastel, Charcoal, Pencil, Conté, Sanguine, or any dry media".

Note that an artwork made using pastels is also called a pastel (or a pastel drawing or pastel painting). Pastel used as a verb means to produce an artwork with pastels. And of course, none of these terms should be confused with the use of pastel as an adjective, to mean pale in colour!

The pastels themselves come in the form of a stick, consisting of pure powdered pigment and a binder. The pigments used in pastels are the same as those used to produce all coloured art media, including oil paints; the binder is of a neutral hue and low saturation.

We detail the main types of pastel used by contemporary artists on the opposite page.

PASTEL TIPS

Soft pastel sticks do become dusty or dirty when transporting, so carry a cloth to wipe them off before drawing.

It's generally easier to work on a toned surface rather than pure white. You can buy toned paper, or tone it yourself using an acrylic or watercolour wash.

To prevent over blending and smudging when using pastels you can use a mist of fixative on that area. Beware: if the fixative is sprayed too heavily, it dramatically dulls and darkens the vibrancy.

Practise with some quick trial runs spraying the fixative to experiment with the light mist approach.

EARLY HISTORY

The manufacture of pastels began as far back as the 15th century. The medium was mentioned by Leonardo da Vinci, who learned of it from the French artist Jean Perréal.

During the 18th century the medium became fashionable for portrait painting, sometimes in a mixed technique with gouache (turn to page 94 for our tutorial on getting started with gouache).

Pastel was an important medium for artists such as Jean-Baptiste Perronneau, Maurice Quentin de La Tour and Rosalba Carriera. The pastel still-life paintings and portraits of Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin are much admired, as are the works of the Swiss-French artist Jean-Étienne Liotard.

In 18th-century England the outstanding practitioner was John Russell. In Colonial America, John Singleton Copley used pastel occasionally for portraits.

DEGAS & MANET

In France, pastels briefly became unpopular during and after the Revolution, as the medium was identified with the frivolity of the Ancien Régime.

But by the mid-19th century, artists such as Eugène Delacroix and especially Jean-François Millet were again making significant use of pastel.

Édouard Manet painted a number of portraits in pastel on canvas, an unconventional ground for the medium. Edgar Degas was also an innovator in pastels, and it became his primary medium after around 1885. Odilon Redon, too, produced a large body of works in pastel.

The popularity of pastels soon spread across the globe. Society of Painters in Pastel was founded in the United States in 1885, while the Pastellists, led by Leon Dabo, was an organization of artists that formed in New York at the end of 1910 for the purpose of exhibiting artwork produced in the medium of pastel.

MODERN DAY USE

Pastels has continued to be popular and the medium has been favoured by many contemporary artists because of its broad range of bright colours.

Notable artists who have worked extensively in pastels include Fernando Botero, Francesco Clemente, Daniel Greene, Wolf Kahn, and R. B. Kitaj. Read on to find out how to follow in their footsteps and incorporate pastels into your art…

> 66 **Soft pastel sticks become dusty or dirty, so carry a cloth to wipe them off before drawing** 99
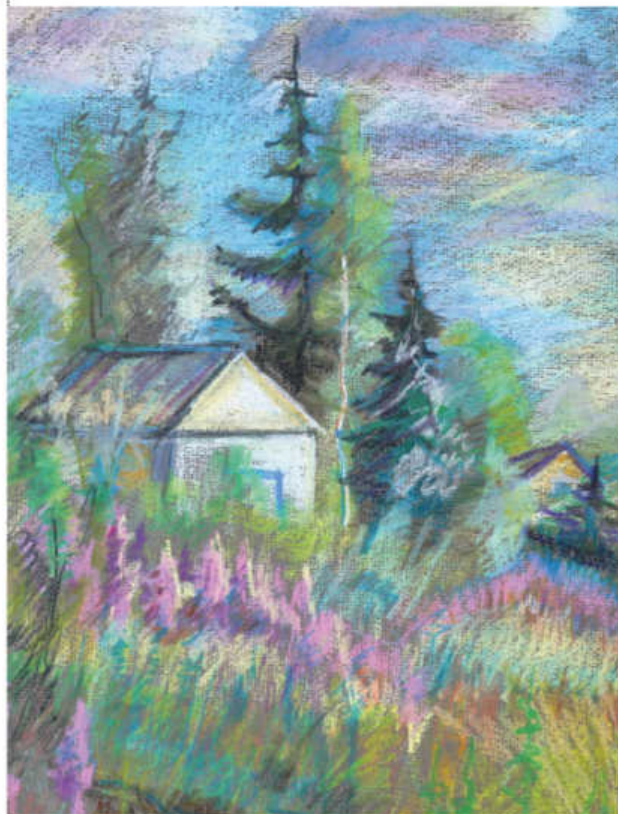
CHOOSE THE RIGHT PASTELS

There's a huge variety of pastels to choose from, explains illustrator Terese Nielsen.

1 *All pastels are not equal*

Soft pastels have a rich, buttery feel and are easy to blend. Hard pastels, including pastel pencils, are great for adding detail. Oil pastels have an oil binder, are less opaque than soft pastels and don't smudge as easily. The newest water-soluble pastels create semi-transparent washes when water is brushed over them.

2 *Layering and smudging*

Pastels are blended on the art surface, rather than on a palette. A variety of colours can be achieved through layering and smudging. Start with darker colours, working up to light. Blending is done by layering the pastels with various strokes such as crosshatching, dots/pointillism or smudging with different tools, from cotton swabs or #9 brushes, to fingers.

3 *Choose your surface*

The key to selecting paper for pastels is to choose something that has texture or tooth. If it's too smooth, the pastels won't adhere. Check that the paper is pH-neutral. If it's not acid free, it can shift the colour and cause brittleness. Good choices are canvas, watercolour paper, pastel paper and sand board.

4 *Soft and hard pastels*

Soft pastels are rich and luminous in colour, provide a loose grainy texture and are easy to blend with varied surface effect, but are a little fragile. Hard pastels are a little less vibrant in colour, but more stable than soft pastels. They're great for adding detail to your drawings.

PAN PASTELS

NEW TOOL

A 21st-century invention, Pan Pastels are formulated with a minimum of binder in flat compacts (similar to some makeup) and applied with special soft micropore sponge tools. No liquid is involved. Pan Pastels can be used for the entire painting or in combination with soft and hard sticks.
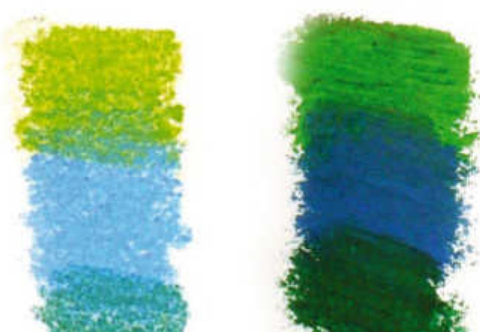
5 *Pastel pencils and oil pastels*

Pastel pencils come in a pencil 'lead' form and are easy to control. Pastel pencils are ideal for fine detail and rendering, and are a harder lead than soft pastels. Oil pastels contain an oil binder. They have a thick intense colour, but don't smudge and blend like soft/hard pastels.

6 *Water soluble pastels*

Water soluble pastels can be used just like a regular soft pastel, except that you can also create watercolour-like washes with a brush and water, providing great variety in the artistic effects you can achieve.

DRAWING
NEXT STEPS

Next steps

HOW TO DRAW IN COLOUR

Moving from monochrome to colour is a big step. CHRIS LEGASPI explains how he uses a limited colour palette to add life and vibrancy to his drawings.

Colour separates painting from drawing, bringing life and vibrancy to paintings and sketches. Yet because colour is so complex, I prefer to simplify colour and limit the colours I use as much as possible. To do this I must first properly shift a colour's temperature.

Temperature is a property of colour that's often misunderstood. It refers to how warm or cool a colour is. I define warm colours as red, yellow and orange. Cool colours are blue, green and violet. Temperature is relative, so any colour has a warm and cool version. One way to apply this to figure painting is by starting with only two colours, using burnt umber as my warm and ultramarine blue as the cool.

These two colours enable me to create a range of warm and cool greys of varying value and intensity. Once I've completed the first pass of colour, I'll then add variations and temperature shifts.

Variation and temperature shifts are the secret to making colour feel, quite simply, believable. For example, I'll add a wash of yellow to the light side of the skin to enhance the colour.

Next, I'll begin to carefully add reds and pinks to the blood-rich and sun-tanned areas such as the hands, face, knees and feet. Finally, I'll add more subtle cool colours like blue and green to the half-tones: this helps to make the skin look that bit more alive and realistic-looking.

Chris is keen to share his extensive knowledge of figure drawing and painting. See more of his work and drawing advice at www.freshdesigner.com.

MATERIALS

■ Watercolour paper, white sable brush, graphite pencil or red Prismacolor pencil, #5 or #8 round Burnt Umber, Alizarin, Crimson, Yellow Ochre & Ultramarine Blue watercolours

ARTIST INSIGHT
VENTURE OUTSIDE

To rapidly improve your colour skills, paint outdoors in natural light. Spend between 10 and 20 minutes a day and do quick studies of landscapes, gardens, parks and urban scenes.

Warm colours

Cool colours

Warm and cool are relative

Warm/cool yellow Warm/cool orange Warm/cool red Warm/cool purple Warm/cool blue Warm/cool green

1 *Understanding temperature*
Temperature is relative, so any colour can have a warm or cool version depending on the colours around it. Even warm colours such as red, yellow and orange can look cool, and likewise blue, green and violet can be made warm by using them in conjunction with other colours.

Warm (Burnt Umber)

Cool (Ultramarine Blue)

2 *Block in shadow*
Once the drawing is established, I block in the shadow. For the colour of the shadow, I mix Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Umber to create a medium dark value, blue-grey. Because most art studio lights have a warm colour, the cool shadow creates dynamic colour contrast.

Burnt Umber

Ultramarine
Blue

3 *Transition tones*
I put a wash of dark, blue-grey on the border of the shadow shape. This softens the edge and creates a transition of value from dark to light. To mix the darker tone, I use Burnt Umber and Ultramarine Blue again, but with more pigment and less water.

Alizarin Crimson

Yellow Ochre

Ultramarine Blue

4 *Half-tones and lights*
To create a base flesh-tone, I use a mixture of Alizarin Crimson, Yellow Ochre and Ultramarine Blue. I add more yellow to the light-facing planes, which results in a more life-like colour. For the half-tones, I add more red and blue for greater colour saturation and a darker value.

Add saturated yellows and reds for colour variation and to gradually increase saturation

Yellow Ochre

Light warm-yellow mix

Alizarin Crimson

Add cools to the half-tones in the skin
Ultramarine Blue

Cool grey halftone mix

Yellow Ochre

Alizarin Crimson
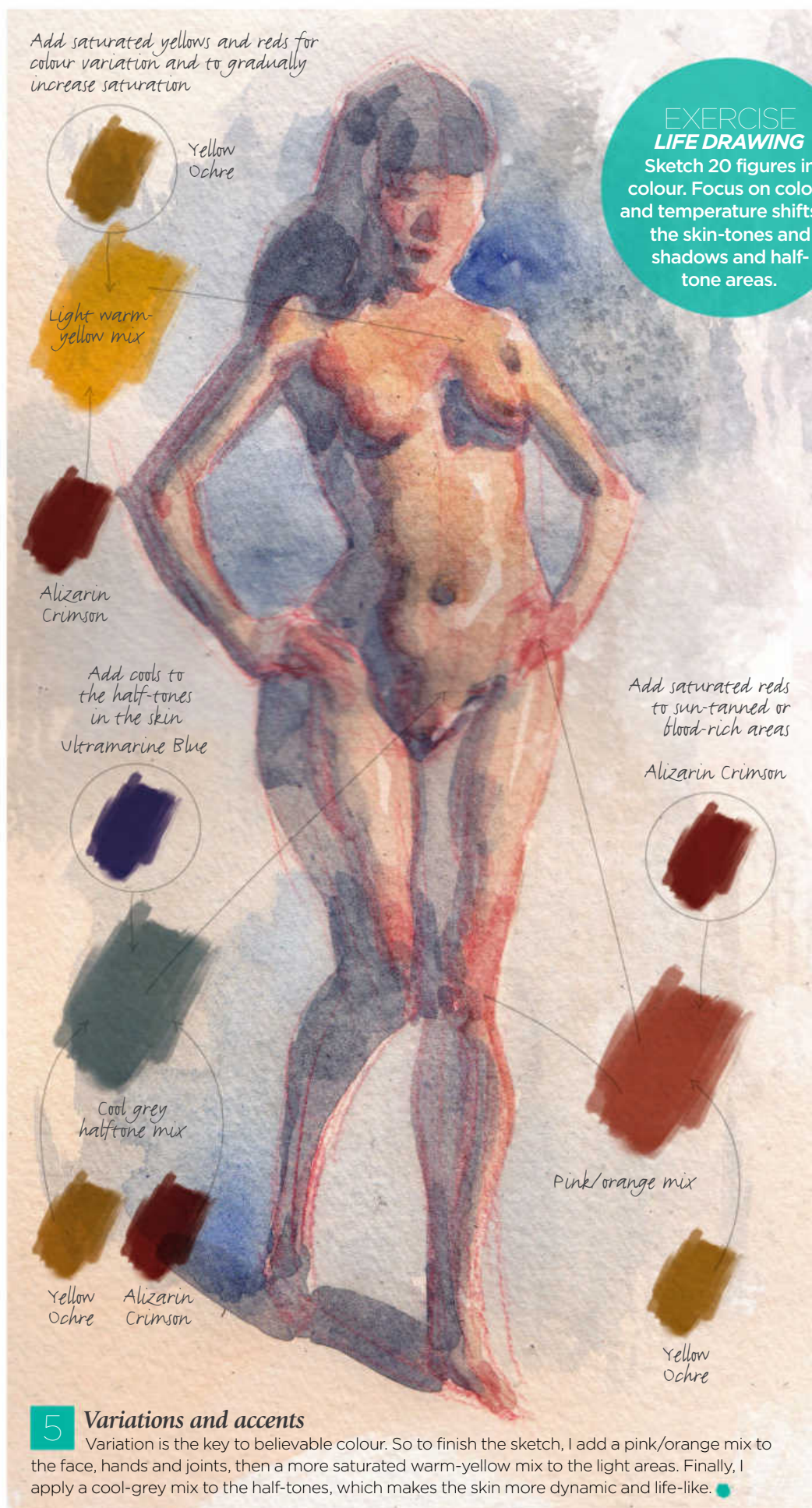
EXERCISE
LIFE DRAWING
Sketch 20 figures in colour. Focus on colour and temperature shifts in the skin-tones and shadows and half-tone areas.

Add saturated reds to sun-tanned or blood-rich areas

Alizarin Crimson

Pink/orange mix

Yellow Ochre

5 *Variations and accents*
Variation is the key to believable colour. So to finish the sketch, I add a pink/orange mix to the face, hands and joints, then a more saturated warm-yellow mix to the light areas. Finally, I apply a cool-grey mix to the half-tones, which makes the skin more dynamic and life-like.

Next steps

HOW TO DRAW AND SHADE IN 3D

Shading is key to giving a sense of depth to your two-dimensional drawings. CHRIS LEGASPI walks you through the process he uses.

As a figurative artist, I want every one of my drawings to feel three-dimensional. One method I use is constructing and shading the figure using three-dimensional forms.

First, I look for the key landmarks on the figure – these inlude corners and direction changes, apexes of forms, and overlaps and intersections. They will help me to develop the drawing.

I start with simple, geometric forms: cylinders, boxes and spheres, for example. Depending on the pose and effect I want, I'll begin with either a boxy or rounded form. Next, I'll refine the construction by adding secondary or compound forms.

I use a combination of spheres, cylinders and rectangles and blend them together, transitioning from one form to another.

For the shading, I start by separating the shadow shape and emphasising the core shadow. The core shadow is vital because it defines the plane change from light to shadow. To complete the rendering, I'll add a wash of half-tone using simplified spheres and cylinders as a guide.

For example, I'll shade the head as a sphere, and the torso and arms as cylinders. This will not only soften the core shadow, but also model and round the form, and further enhance the feeling of a three-dimensional object.

MATERIALS
■ Smooth newsprint paper, Carbothello pencil, black (or Conte B) Willow charcoal sticks (medium grade), kneaded eraser bristle brush, round #4 or #6 white charcoal pencil or pastel, ballpoint pen, sketchbook

Core shadows are corners

▲ = Apex

Rounded corner

Corner

◯ = Overlap

Direction changes

Apexes are also corners

Overlaps and intersections

Apexes are also corners

1 Look for corners
I identify key landmarks, corners, overlaps and intersections. I also look at the shadow pattern because core shadows are also corners. These areas give me clues as to where forms end, begin and change direction. They help me design the forms I use for constructing the figure.

ARTIST INSIGHT
GO STRAIGHT

Be bold with straight marks and use them often. Even though the body is round and organic, straights can quickly communicate form by defining the contours, corners and direction changes.

Any round form can be made square and vice versa

2 Simplify the base forms
I start with simple, geometric forms such as cylinders, boxes and spheres. Depending on the pose, I'll use either boxy forms or rounded forms. While drawing, I can also make any round form square or vice versa. This helps to create different effects and moods in the drawing.

Forms seamlessly blend from square to round and round to square

small forms blending and transitioning

sphere and egg-like forms can quickly describe complex curved forms of the body
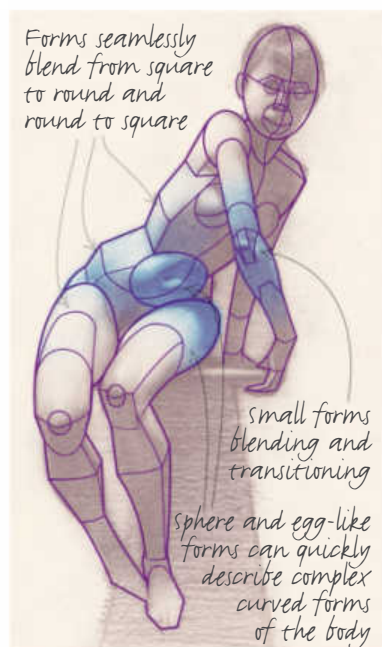
3 *Compound forms*

Next I'll refine the construction with more complex compound forms. I like to use a combination of eggs, spheres, rectangles and boxes together and make them transition and blend together. This helps the drawing feel more natural, because the body already works this way.

Emphasise the corners and plane changes

Corners of smaller forms
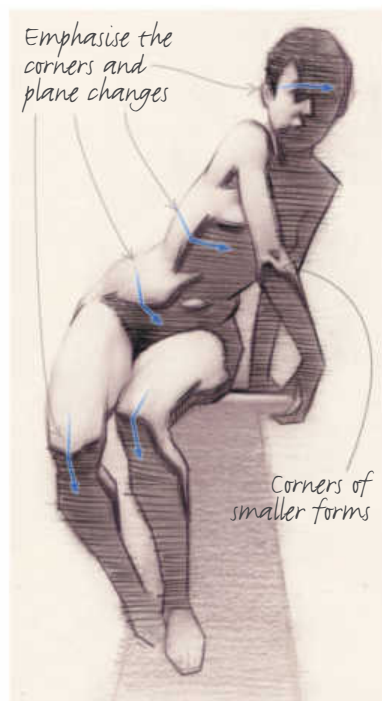
4 *Define the corners*

I continue by defining the corner of the light and shadow, which is the core shadow. By emphasising this shadow, I'm able to create a dramatic three-dimensional effect on the canvas. I'll begin with more boxy core shadows and then round and soften them as I develop the drawing.

For half-tones, shade a simple cylinder, sphere or box
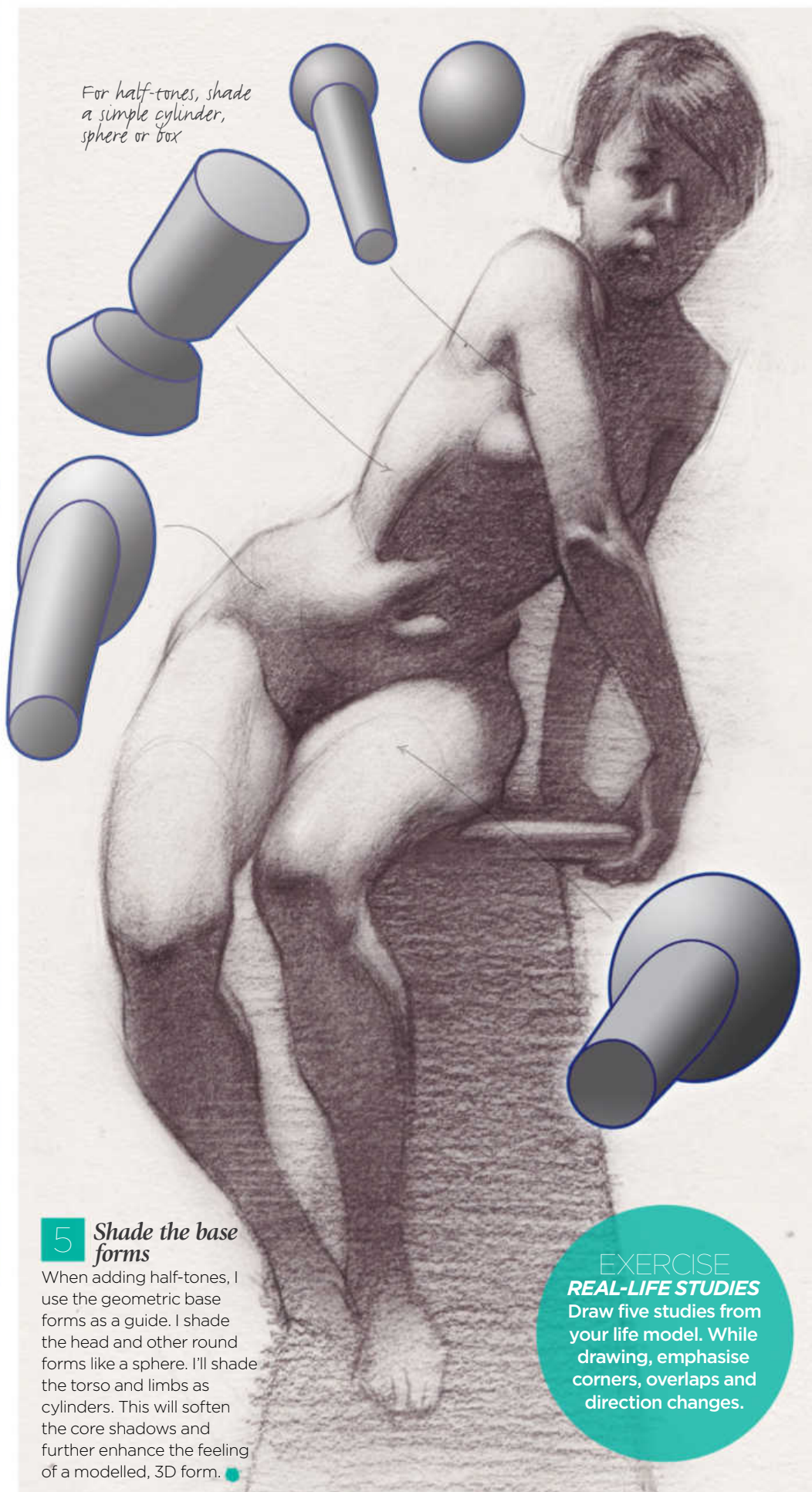
5 *Shade the base forms*

When adding half-tones, I use the geometric base forms as a guide. I shade the head and other round forms like a sphere. I'll shade the torso and limbs as cylinders. This will soften the core shadows and further enhance the feeling of a modelled, 3D form.

EXERCISE
REAL-LIFE STUDIES
Draw five studies from your life model. While drawing, emphasise corners, overlaps and direction changes.

Next steps

HOW TO ADD SOFT SHADOWS

CHRIS LEGASPI explains how to render diffused or ambient light and immerse your art in soft and subtle shadows, with these tried-and-tested pointers.

Ambient lighting feels more natural and realistic because it produces soft and subtle shadows. This kind of subtlety is beautiful to see, yet it takes skill and patience to successfully recreate on the page.

First, I observe the light and the shadow patterns. I block in the darkest areas such as the eye sockets, under the neck and any dark-coloured objects – hair or clothing, for example. My edges are extra soft and I apply a medium-to-dark value tone using big, broad strokes.

Then I simplify the head into an oval shape and add gradients of tone in two directions: bottom to top (vertical) and left to right (horizontal). I simplify the neck into a cylinder and add gradients of tone. This helps to set the stage for the rendering and creates subtle half-tones.

I then render and model smaller forms and features. I simplify these elements into flat, geometric planes, which enables me to add tone as planes that turn away from the light. To model features, I focus on either the topography or the surface of the form, instead of trying to match the values.

Finally, I add straights and hard edges – I'll also apply a rough technique, which adds much-needed contrast to the soft, rendered areas.

Because ambient light drawings are so soft and subtle, edge and technique variation makes the drawing more interesting, life-like and believable.

MATERIALS

■ Smooth newsprint paper Carbothello pencil, black (or Conte' B), willow charcoal sticks, kneaded eraser, round bristle brushes or blending stump

Keep edges soft

Use a light touch for construction lines

1 Block in darks
I block in the darkest areas – usually in the underplane of forms such as eye sockets, the bottom of the nose, lower jaw and upper lip. I also group dark-coloured objects like her hair. My tones have medium-to-dark edges and are very soft.

The neck, as a cylinder, also has horizontal and vertical gradients

Vertical gradient (bottom to top)

Horizontal gradient (left to right)
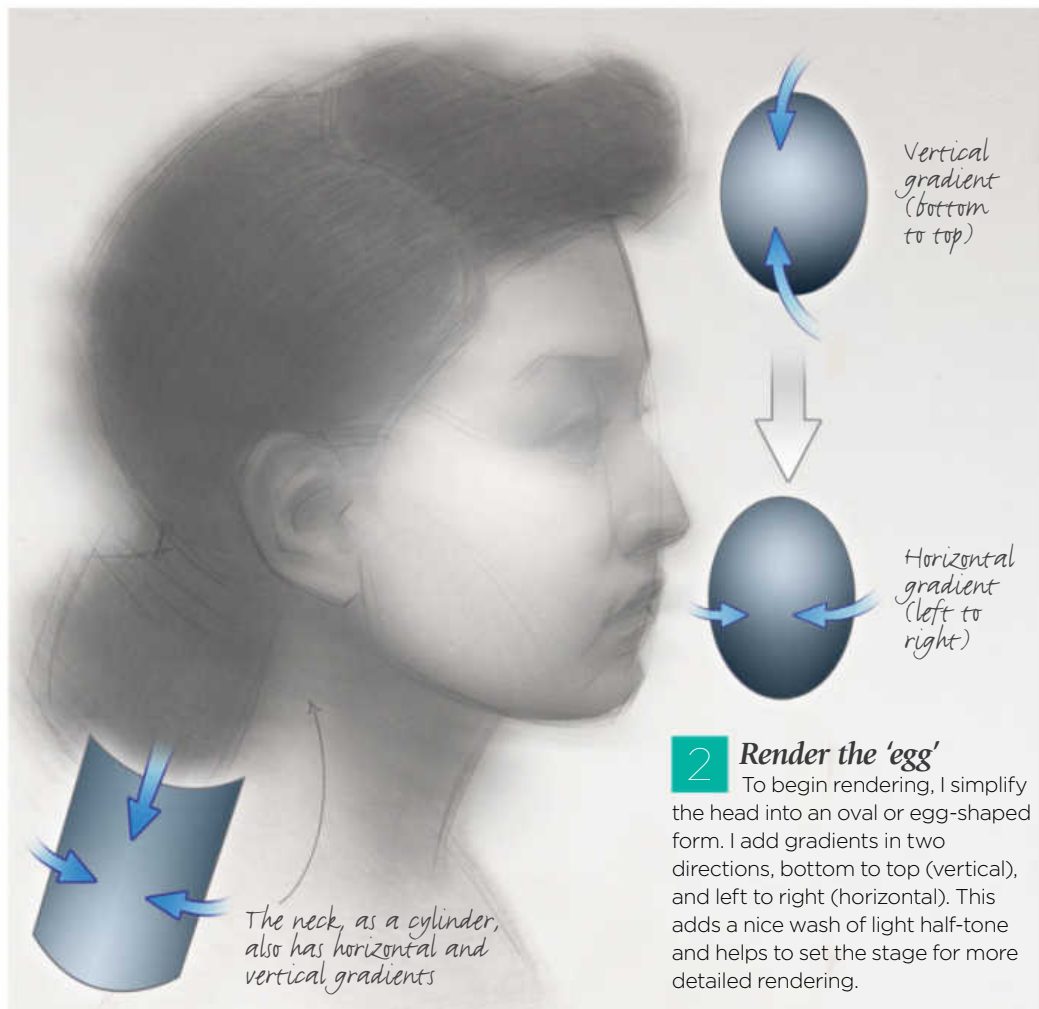
2 Render the 'egg'
To begin rendering, I simplify the head into an oval or egg-shaped form. I add gradients in two directions, bottom to top (vertical), and left to right (horizontal). This adds a nice wash of light half-tone and helps to set the stage for more detailed rendering.

Highlights on plane intersections (corners)

Don't draw the features – instead, shade them as geometric shapes and planes

Add tone and value as planes that turn away from light

secondary planes

Erase highlights

Eyes

Nose

Cheeks

Ear

Neck

Mouth and lips
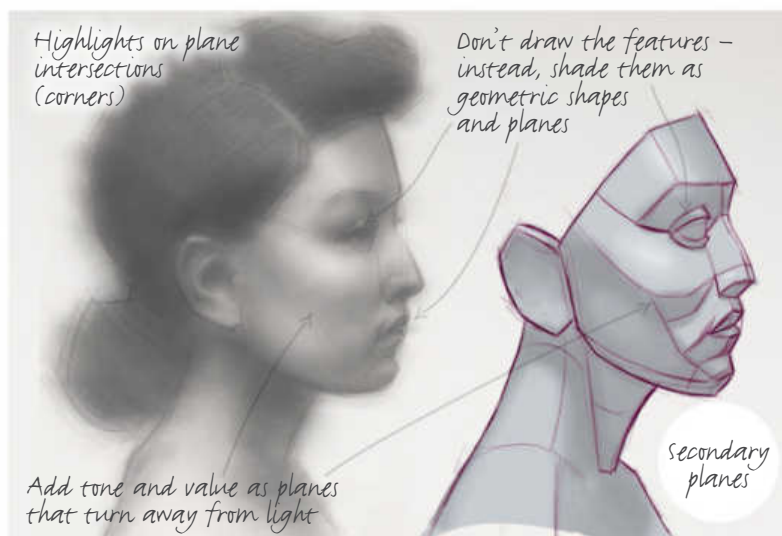
3 Shading secondary structures

Next are the secondary structures: eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth and jaw. I simplify the head into geometric planes and add tone to planes that turn away from the light. This helps define form, but also creates beautiful and natural half-tones that will help with the rendering of the features.

ARTIST INSIGHT
SLOW IT DOWN

For subtle figure drawings, I take frequent breaks, view my drawing from a distance and build up values slowly. Such drawings require extra time and care.

Rough technique

straights

Dark accent

Lost edge

straights

Dark accent

straights

Lost edge

straights

Rough technique
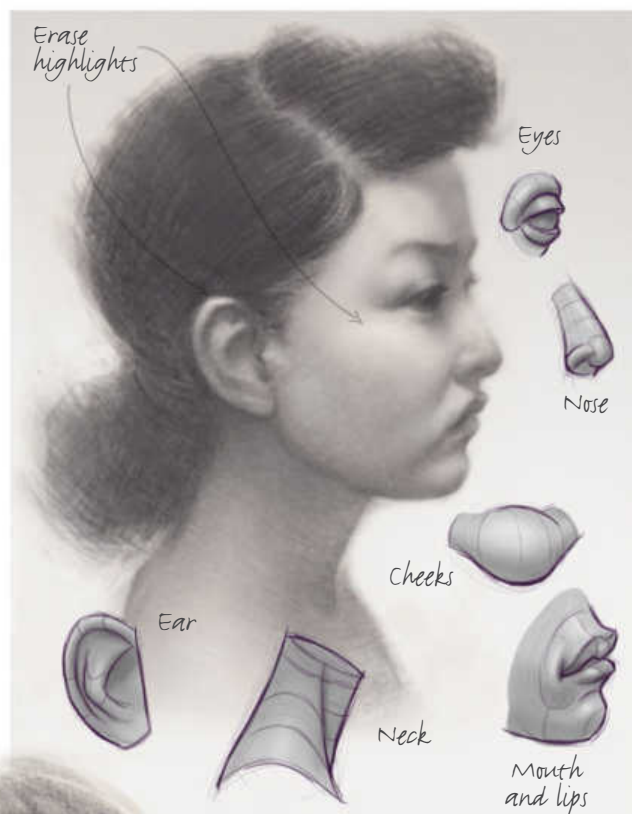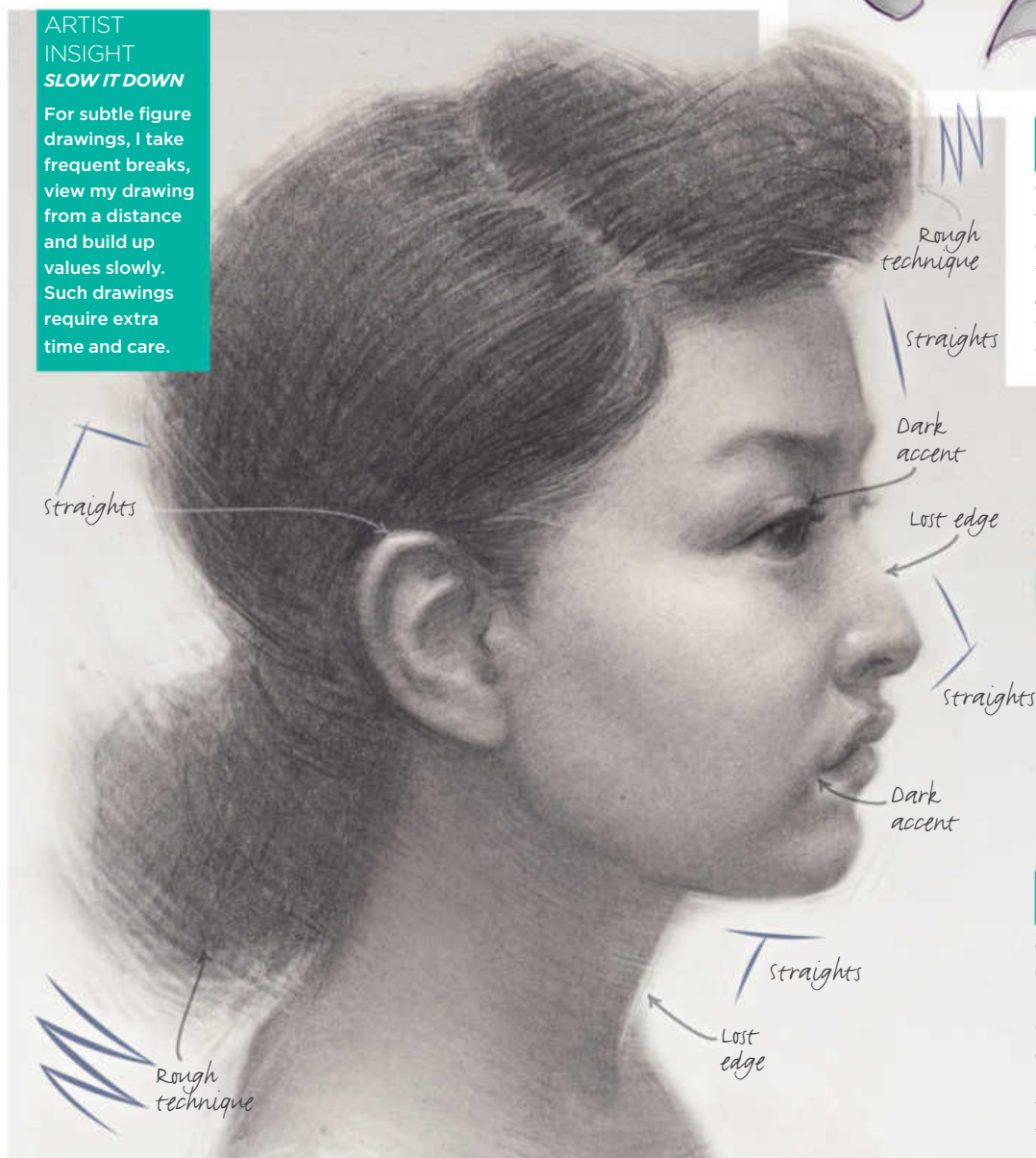
4 Model form

Modelling form is fun, but takes time. I use soft edges and subtle dark values to model form, focusing more on the topography (the surface of the form) than on the values. I then blend and soften the edges, before erasing the highlights to make the forms feel three-dimensional.

EXERCISE
PRACTISE THE THEORY
Draw and render one ambient light study from life or a photo. Use the techniques described here to complete the render.

5 Edge variation

To finish I add variation in edge and technique. Because the edges are so soft, adding subtle hard edges and straights make the drawing much more interesting and appear more life-like. Rough or unfinished technique also makes the rendered areas feel more finished and more polished.

Next steps

HOW TO DRAW HEADS

There is a crucial science to depicting the head accurately, either from life or observation. CHRIS LEGASPI explains the basic principles to follow.

Because head drawing is so complex, it's a good idea at first to simplify as much as possible, starting with simple shapes and then slowly beginning to add features.

I like to start out by making careful observations and looking for key landmarks, such as anatomy, and the gesture of the head. I make sure to establish the outer shape solidly, looking at the extreme edges of the face and hair. That done, I draw an outline that captures the general shape.

Next, I begin to place the features by locating the crosshairs – the vertical and horizontal centre of the head. This defines how much of the face you see and the direction of the model's gaze. I indicate the features by defining the rule of thirds, which places the hairline, brow ridge and the bottom of the nose.

To construct the head, I like to use boxy forms and planes. Planes work well in head drawing because they define corners and direction changes. I like corners because they make heads feel solid and three dimensional. Once the planes and structures are established, I complete the drawing stage with the features, and small details, like the eye openings, nostrils, ears and hair.

To finish the drawing, I add light and shadow. First, I use mid-value tone to block in the shadow, making sure to group dark objects (such as hair) as well.

MATERIALS

■ Smooth newsprint paper, Carbothello pencil, black (or Conte B) or Willow charcoal sticks (medium grade) neaded eraser, Ballpoint pen, Sketchbook

Extreme top

Extreme side

Extreme side

Extreme side

Extreme side

Extreme bottom

Common head shapes

oval   square   hybrid

Vertical and horizontal centre

1/2

1/2

'Rule of thirds'

1/3

1/3

1/3
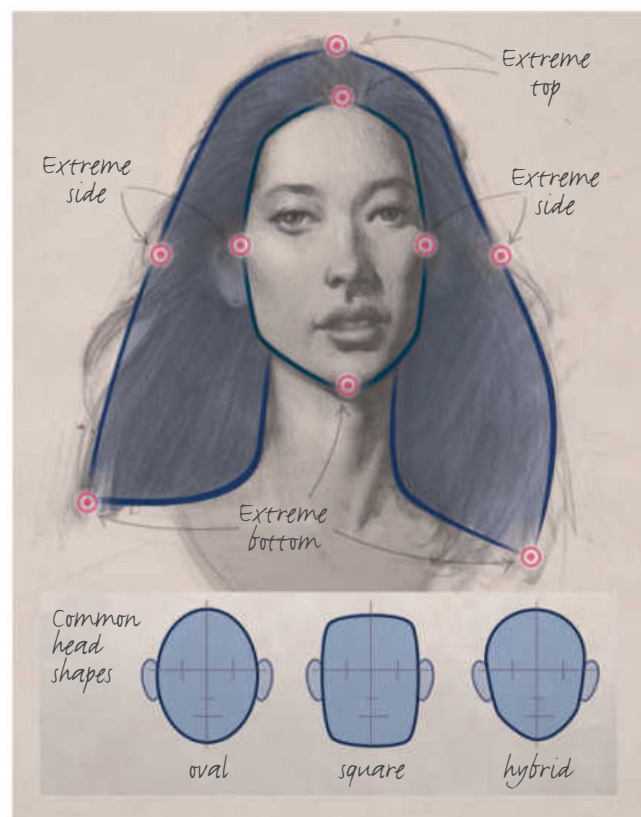
1 Define the outer shape
It's good to start by observing the key landmarks, especially the top, sides and bottom of the head. Using the landmarks as a guide, I then design a shape that captures the general shape I see. For head shapes, oval, square and combinations of both work well.
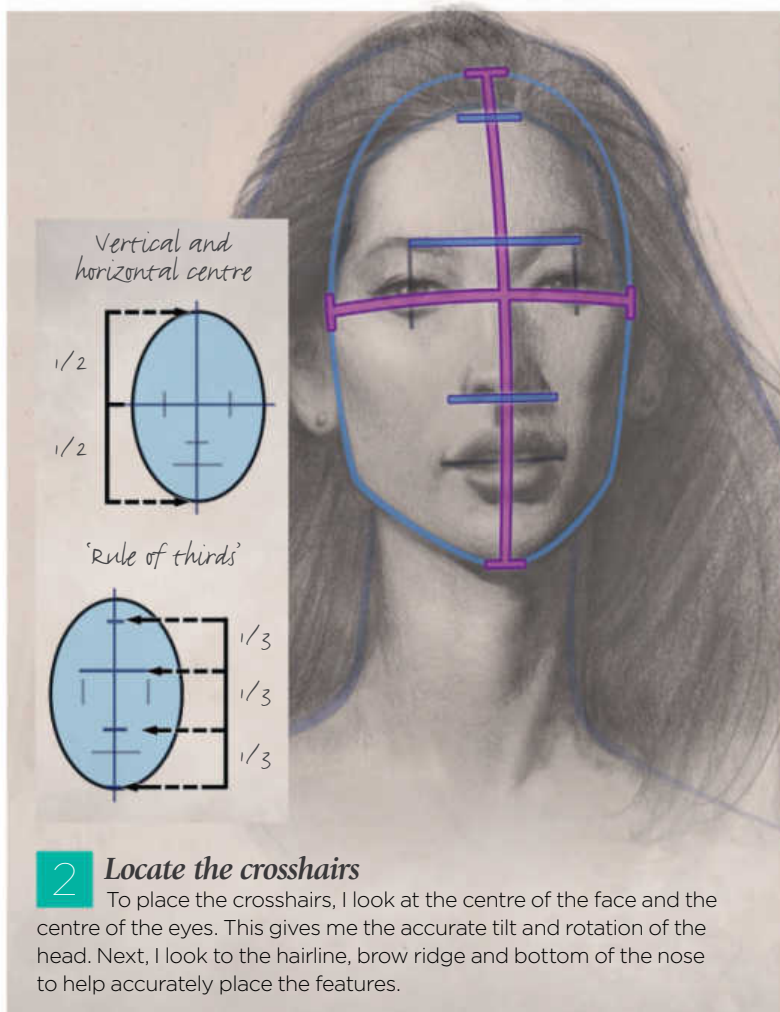
2 Locate the crosshairs
To place the crosshairs, I look at the centre of the face and the centre of the eyes. This gives me the accurate tilt and rotation of the head. Next, I look to the hairline, brow ridge and bottom of the nose to help accurately place the features.

side plane (in light)   Top plane

Bottom planes

side planes (shadow)

side plane (in light)

3 Define planes

Using planes helps to make my drawing feel solid, three-dimensional, and also aids the rendering process. I begin by first breaking up the head into top, side and front planes. Then I carve into the planes to refine the drawing as appropriate. Once that's done, I begin tackling the features by constructing them, also in planes.

Tearducts   Inside curve of ear

Ear connection

Corners of mouth
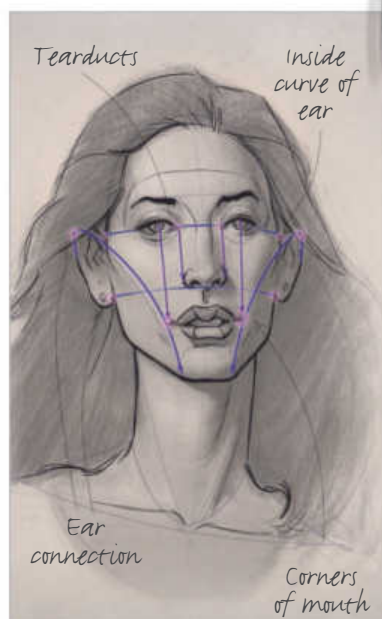
4 Features and details

I complete the drawing stage by refining the features and other small details, before going on to refine my original constructions until I achieve a likeness. For greater accuracy, I use the natural rhythms in the anatomy to help place the features. This also helps with proportion and adds gesture to the drawing.

EXERCISE
HEADS UP!
Draw 30 heads from observation in the next 30 days. Spend 5-10 minutes per drawing, focusing on observation and consistency.

ARTIST INSIGHT

PLEIN-AIR PRACTICE

Drawing people in public is my favourite exercise. Because the poses are random and unpredictable, it forces me to simplify the head and make the most of the opportunity with very few marks.

Light and shadow pattern   Half-tones and transition tones   Dark accents and highlights
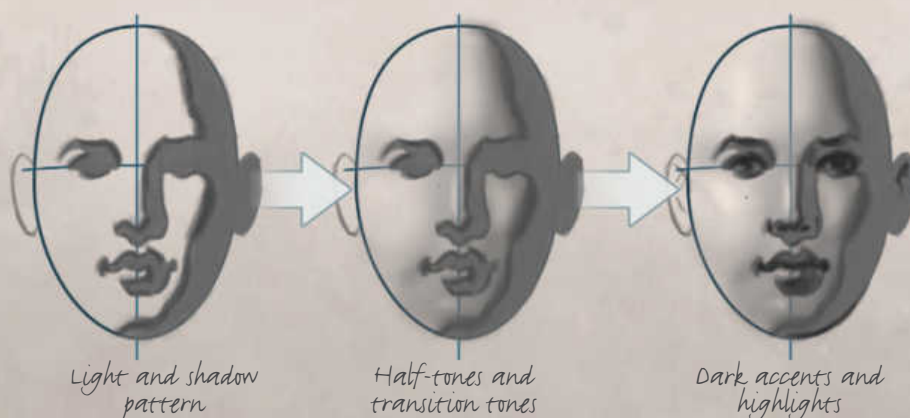
5 Light and shade

I begin the lighting and shading process by first separating the light from shadow. I'll often draw out the shadow pattern and then fill it with a mid-value tone. Then I'll continue the rendering process with half-tones and conclude with the dark accents and highlights.

Next steps

HOW TO SKETCH ANIMAL SHAPES

BRYNN METHENEY explains how working from general to specific is an effective technique for drawing animals.

Drawing animals is the first step to designing your own fantasy creatures. Nature has an amazing variety of solutions, shapes, colours and sizes to solve the challenge of survival. You'll find that drawing and studying animals will yield more exciting and unique ideas to your artwork.

I always begin with broad gestures and light pencil marks when starting a sketch. I'm only trying to find the animal's gesture, so I tend to work quickly. This is especially key when drawing from life, where animals move about as you draw.

I like to use a harder lead pencil or broad lead pencil, depending on how large I'm working. The harder lead keeps my stroke light. Using my whole arm to draw, I sketch through the forms. Animators tend to use this technique and I've found it adds energy to my drawings.

From here, I'll build up my animal sketch by finding the muscle groups. I'm able to identify and memorise where these groups lie, based on the body plan of my subject.

Quickly adding in a bit of value and suggested form, I can give weight and depth to my sketch. Only now do I suggest some detail. However, there are more animals to draw and this technique can yield fast and effective results. Time to move on to the next beast!

Brynn specialises in creature design, fantasy illustration and visual development for film, games and publishing. She lives and works in Oakland, California. See her work at www.brynnart.com.

MATERIALS

■ Caran D'ache Grafwood pencils: 2H, HB and B
■ Kneaded eraser
■ Acid-free sketchbook paper

ARTIST INSIGHT
PENCIL IT IN

Have a few of each pencil type with different lead points. Some can be sharp for small details and others can be dull for filling in large areas.

1 Create a light sketch

I begin with a light sketch of a bear. I don't want to make any solid marks or bold lines yet, I'm just finding the shapes of the animal's form. I will break it into a wire skeleton and shapes to start. This is the foundation of my study.
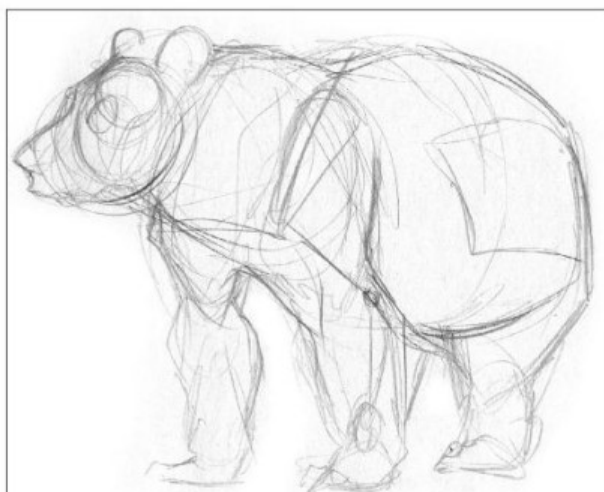
I keep my arm loose so I can move quickly. This is the messy stage where things don't have to be right!

I'm building up the form with repetitive, fluid strokes to keep the drawing loose and full of motion.
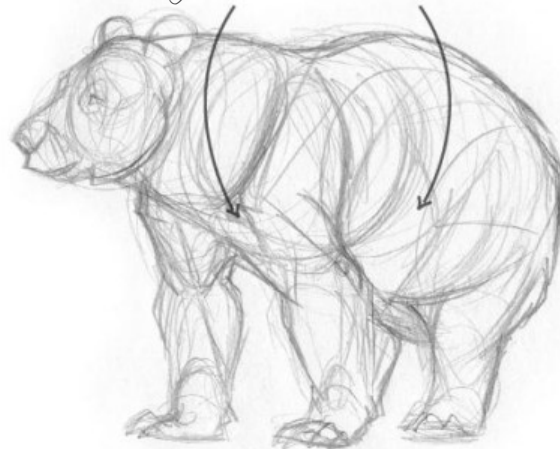
2 Drawing through forms

As I begin to build up my drawing, I'll draw through forms. This means that I'm not worried about forms covering each other, but rather I begin to see through them. This helps to keep the drawing fluid and keeps me aware of where the forms are overlapping in space. I'm also looking for landmarks, such as the scapula and knee caps, to help me locate the anatomy of the animal as it develops on the paper.

Locating the joints and major muscle groups helps to keep the sketch grounded and accurate. This can help with fur placement and rendering later on.

Adding in some value can help to turn the form. I'm imagining a light source from above the bear.
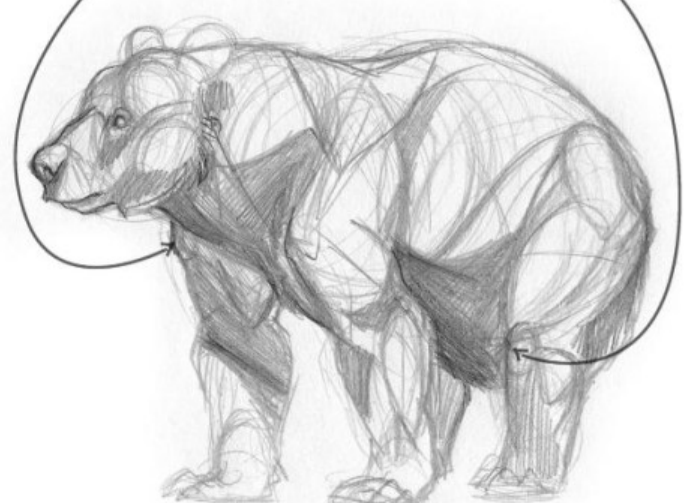
3 *Finding the muscle groups*

This is where my experience in drawing real-life animals frequently comes to help. I'm able to locate and find a variety of different muscle groups based on both my previous studies and memory. However, I'm always sure to really look at my subject so as not to miss out on what's actually in front of me.

4 *Introducing form and value*

Now that I've got a solid blueprint in place, I can begin to add in some quick values. This is where heavier lead comes in handy. I tend to alternate from HB and B lead, but you can use what you're comfortable with. I'll draw with these heavier pencils to nail in those lines, and flesh out the forms of the muscle groups, too.

Adding fur in correlation with the muscle groups keeps the animal from looking flat.
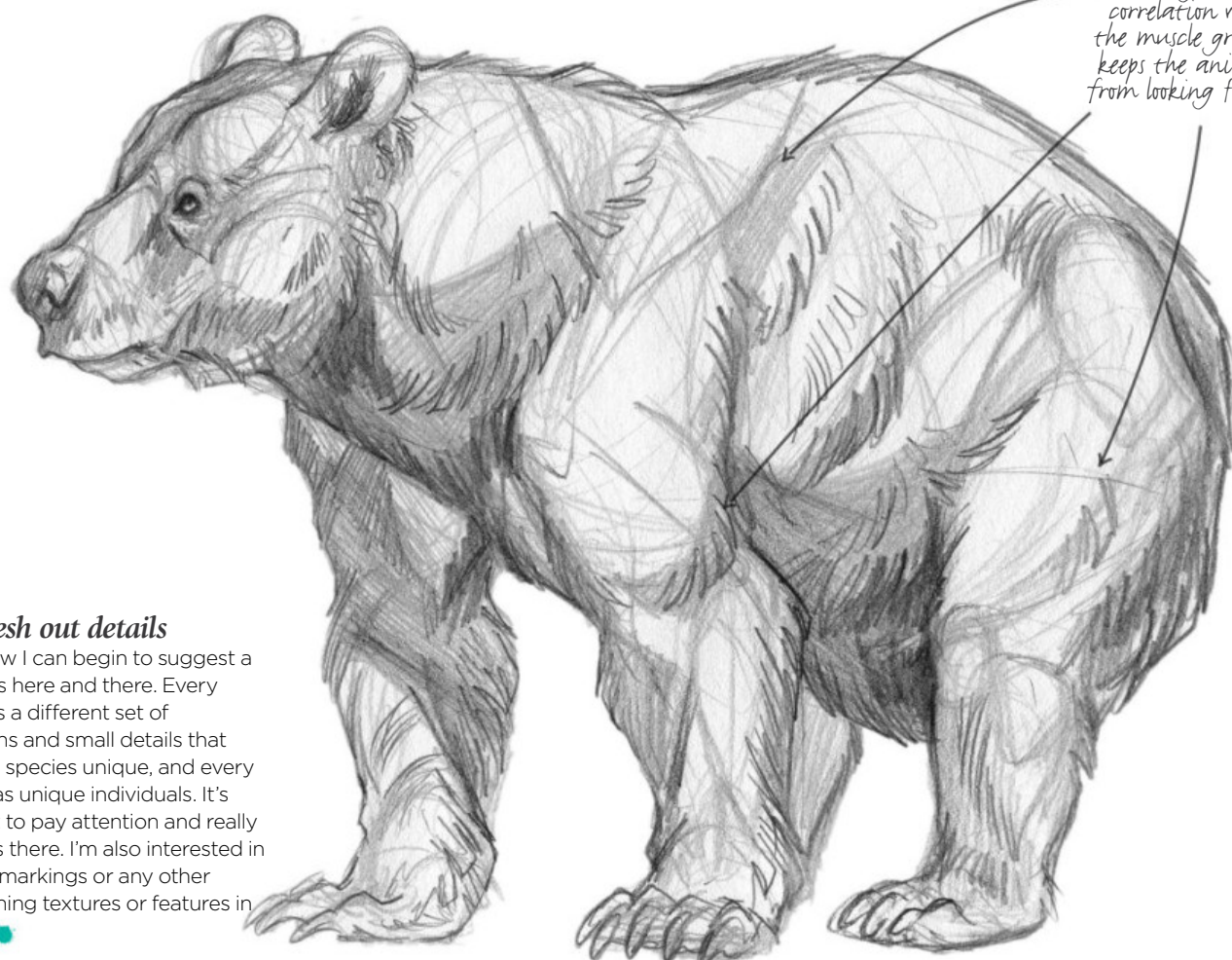
5 *Flesh out details*

Now I can begin to suggest a few details here and there. Every animal has a different set of proportions and small details that make that species unique, and every species has unique individuals. It's important to pay attention and really see what's there. I'm also interested in adding in markings or any other distinguishing textures or features in this step.

Project

HOW TO DRAW WITH MIXED MEDIA

Mixing mediums is one of the best ways to create imaginative art. YOANN LOSSEL demonstrates how to combine gold and graphite for stunning results.

The illustrators of the Golden Age, the Symbolist painters and the Pre-Raphaelites have all passed through my imagination and influenced my art. There's a wide palette of emotions in these images tinted with lyricism and sprinkled with symbolism. I like the ornamental friezes of Heinrich Lefler, the movement of Rackham, the poetry of Dulac, the lights of Doré, the softness of Waterhouse, the strength of Böcklin and the great classical topics of Alma-Tadema.

ART INFLUENCES

Art Nouveau, Art Deco and the Arts and Craft movements quickly filled up my influences, taking things into an ethical dimension, a reflection about art and crafts. All these painters and movements pushed me toward the creation of a studio in a 1900s' spirit, an old binding press facing a beautiful lectern. I grew to be a lover of old techniques, collecting books of oil paintings. My old house in Brittany provides a convenient atmosphere: ancient, lyric, relaxing.

I've been working with graphite and gold leaf for many years now, creating bright ornamentations or golden backgrounds. This approach enables me to create the illusion of depth, despite the two-dimensional canvas. I like to add a natural touch, a bit of a wild world, symbolised by the petals that I fasten on paper. This combination of paper, graphite, gold and hydrangea petals pleases me and makes a lot of things possible.

Every year, the Gallery 1988 organises a show that features artwork inspired by classic cult films. When I was asked to participate in this exhibition (Crazy 4 Cult, held in Los Angeles), I choose to illustrate The Neverending Story in a Golden Age spirit. I hadn't seen the movie in many years, and I was surprised how it affected me and the strength of its message.

Gold leaf will perfectly suit the Auryn pattern, and I will explore the fantastic landscapes of the book with graphite, because Falkor the Luckdragon is already becoming obvious to me. This image will demand lots of work on nuances

supported by different graphite techniques, especially on landscapes because they need a specific depth. An important consideration will also be needed on this golden pattern of the Auryn, the double ourobouros that I'm keen to depict.

This symbol is at once of great interest and evocative. I have in mind to unfold it, to open it to see what it's hiding there...

Yoann lives in Brittany, France, and his art is displayed in several galleries in the US. He also was published in Spectrum 20. He's busy preparing a book for 2016. www.yoannlossel.blogspot.fr

1 Start sketching

Producing rough sketches enables me to visualise on paper the image I've mentally built up. It's an interesting step that highlights the limits of my materials. In contrast, there are no limits in my mind: I can change shapes, colours and proportions of objects. It's now time to choose an idea and confirm that my intuition is correct.

2 A word on composition

Composition is an art unto itself, a domain where you can play with shapes and guide the viewer. Everything must serve the idea. You have to give the illusion of life on a two-dimensional canvas. To check that the composition is working, I use gold paint to indicate where the gold leaf will eventually placed. This saves time – and money! – later on.

3 Prepare the paper

Because I plan to use a graphite wash technique, I need to stretch my sheet of paper to prevent it from crinkling. I soak the back of the paper, then flip it over and fasten it with strips of kraft. As it dries, the paper will shrink and take its final dimensions.

4 Generate a detailed drawing

My art process always involves developing an initial sketch, which will be loose, enabling me to develop the composition as I see fit without any limitations. I organise the primary elements, and this gives an impulse, a movement, to the scene. I use pencils ranging from 3H to H.

DRY OR WET GRAPHITE?
When it's dry, you can use graphite for misty effects and transitions. Use it as a wash to create deep blacks.

5 Establish an atmosphere

I create an atmosphere using a graphite wash. This stage has two functions: it helps to get me into the topic, and it defines the lighter areas of the illustration. I prefer to retain the white of the paper in my art, in a similar manner to painting with watercolours, and so I use a special type of watercolour graphite.

6 Get into the subject

I always start the detailing stage by tackling my main subject first, which I shape slowly. I want Falkor to evolve throughout the painting process; I have the idea that he's living as I paint, growing stronger with each step. I work with pencils, graphite wash and some white gouache, which gives the graphite a light blue tone.

7 Develop the second background

Based on the appearance of Falkor, I work out the shades of grey I'll need to create the different background planes in my image. I decide that I need a second dark background to bring out Falkor. It also gives me a larger palette of nuances to help develop the final background. I work on this with my graphite wash.

ARTIST INSIGHT

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING
It's of great importance to me to live. I have an irrepressible need for nourishing myself, understanding and feeling. I surround myself as much as I can with things that inspire me: books, pieces of art, bric-a-brac, music, movies...
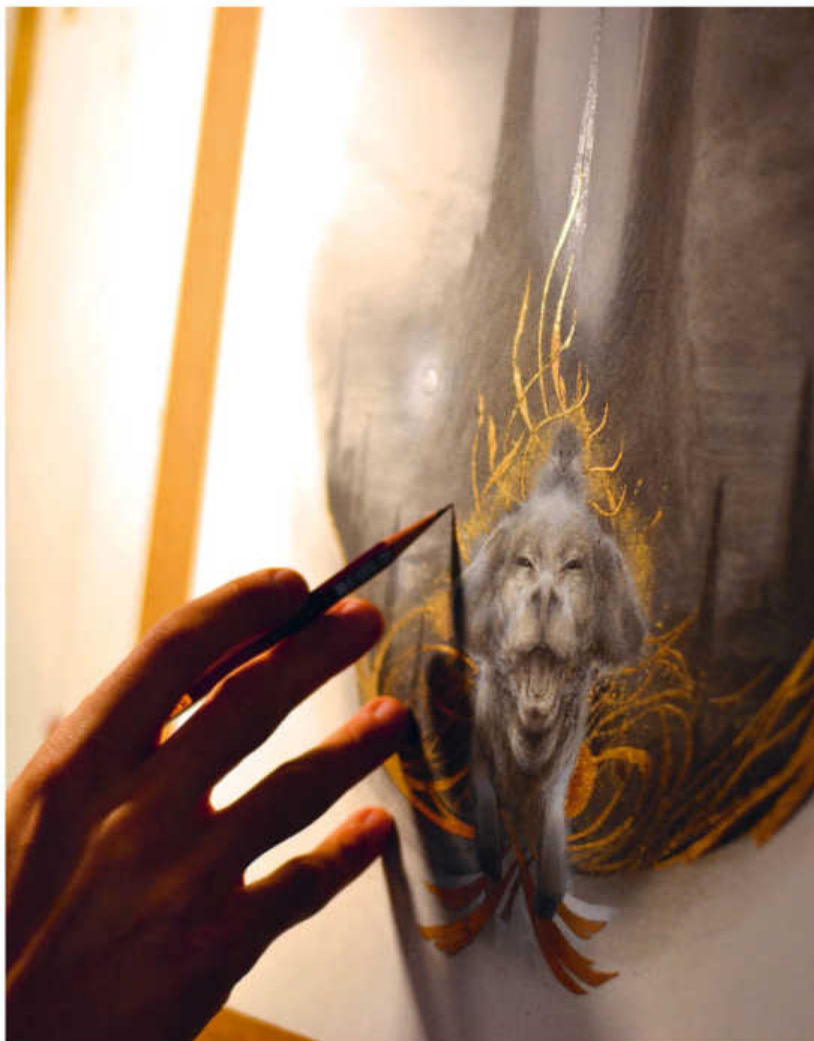
Drawing

8 *The third background*

I move on through the planes in my image. The final one is a little odd because it shows the Ivory Tower. I have to create the illusion of a massive construction that's far off in the distance. I use several dry pencils, ranging from 5H to 2H, and a graphite wash.

9 *Create light*

For this step I use oxidised silver leaf, which has a beautiful water-green tone. I use it to give the illusion of reverse lightning. I define two little green moons, which helps me to add depth. These simple geometric shapes enhance my composition.

10 *Prepare the ornamentation*

I draw in the details of the ornamental figures that surround my central medallion. I'm keen to accompany the movement to create a style on its own that also matches the main subject. I like my illustrations to suit the spirit of the Golden Age of Illustration.

11 *Gilding and glue*

Now that my Arabesque decorative motifs are in place, I apply gold mixtion to one bit of the pattern at a time. There are many different kind of mixtion available, with various drying times. I mostly use the illumination mixtion manufactured by Kölner. I also use the three- and 24-hour mixtions, depending on the pattern I'm working up.

12 *Lay in gold leaf*

When the mixtion is finally ready to receive the gold leaf, I cut it meticulously and apply it with a brush. The gold leaf is fragile, and needs to be handled with care. I use a filbert sable brush to place the gold leaf on to the glue. This brush also enables me to remove any excess gold leaf.
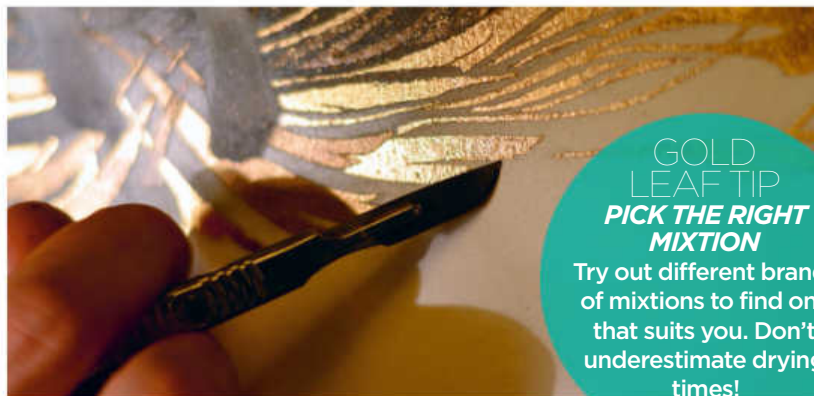
13 *Make precision cuts*

Using a scalpel, I define the gold leaf's outlines. This stage is all about removing the last bits of excess gold leaf and refining the contours of the motif. I use a range of different sized scalpel blades, depending on where I am in the creative process. A good, sharp tool is needed, especially on this step where precision and a light touch is all you can rely on.

14 *Enhance the medallion*

Very slowly, I gild my pattern, going around my medallion. I maintain a balance in the final pattern by rubbing some parts with an agate, which creates gradations within the gold. I gild some parts of my image early in the process, so that I'm able to create these gradations. Indeed, using the graphite wash obscures my first gilding efforts.

15 *Where contrasts are settled*

In this final step, I rely on my gilding work to adjust any visual nuances in the piece. Some parts of my image need to be darkened, while others should be enhanced. In this case, I decide I have to bring out more of Falkor. So I apply white gouache to him using an airbrush. Because the light from the gold leaf is so strong, it needs to be balanced by other areas in the image. Then I step back from the artwork and call my take on The Neverending Story finished.

Next steps

HOW TO PREPARE A SKETCH FOR PAINT

Illustrator TERESE NIELSEN explains a fast way to mount your final sketch to a paintable surface, with a little help from a scanner and a printer.

Traditionally, a drawing would be created on tracing paper before being retraced onto the desired painting surface, using carbon/transfer paper. This could take between two and six hours, just to be ready to paint.

Nowadays, with a scanner and printer, you can print on almost any surface and be ready to paint in just a few minutes. I use Epson's 4880 Ultrachrome archival printer. These prints can be submerged in water and no bleeding occurs. If you're limited to a regular inkjet printer, seal the print Crystal Clear before wet-stretching the print. When it is stretched and dry, it's ready for paint. If you're using oil, seal it with Clear Gesso or Matte Medium.

Terese Nielsen is a freelance fantasy artist and illustrator: www.tnielsen.com.

66 You can be ready to paint in just a few minutes 99

1 Select the appropriate paper

First of all, you should experiment with many papers to find out what you prefer. I use acrylic, oil and coloured pencils in one painting, so accordingly my surface needs to work well with each medium. I wet-stretch the printed sketch, because I begin each painting by layering in loose washes of acrylic. If the print is not wet-stretched, the surface will warp and buckle: not good.

2 Submerge the print in water

Hot water can degrade the paper. So instead use room-temperature water, along with a tray, sink or bathtub. The thicker the paper, the longer it needs to soak. For 121 lb paper give it five minutes, but up to 15 minutes for 300 lb of paper. Remove the print, let the excess water drip off the bottom, and place it on a flat piece of drywall/wood/masonite panel.

3 Staple the print to a board

Drywall works well. That's because it's cheap, easy to cut to any size and standard staples easily pierce through it. Wrap duct tape around the cut, powdery edges to avoid getting it on your clothes. For masonite or wood panels, you'll need a staple gun. Use it to staple one inch in from the outside of the print and every two inches around the perimeter. Then let it dry flat.

Inspiration

TRAN NGUYEN

Get inspired by this gallery artist's sketches, which explore themes of memory and emotion

Live For the Sake of Your Soul

"Live for the sake of your soul, because doing otherwise would be irreverent. And if we don't, it will slowly but surely dissipate from our body, leaving a vacant shell bare of existential aesthetics. If you've no family or friends worth living for, then live for the sake of your soul."

Insects of Love

"These three thumbnails and the rough final sketch were completed for a short story over at Tor.com."

Treading through an untrimmed memory

"This is one of my favourite sketches, created for a series that explores the wonder of nostalgia and distant memories."

> ❝ **This explores the wonder of nostalgia** ❞

Artist **PROFILE**

Tran Nguyen
COUNTRY: US

Tran is a Vietnam-born artist who's living in Georgia. The painter is represented by Thinkspace Gallery in California, where she exhibits much of her work.
mynameistran.com
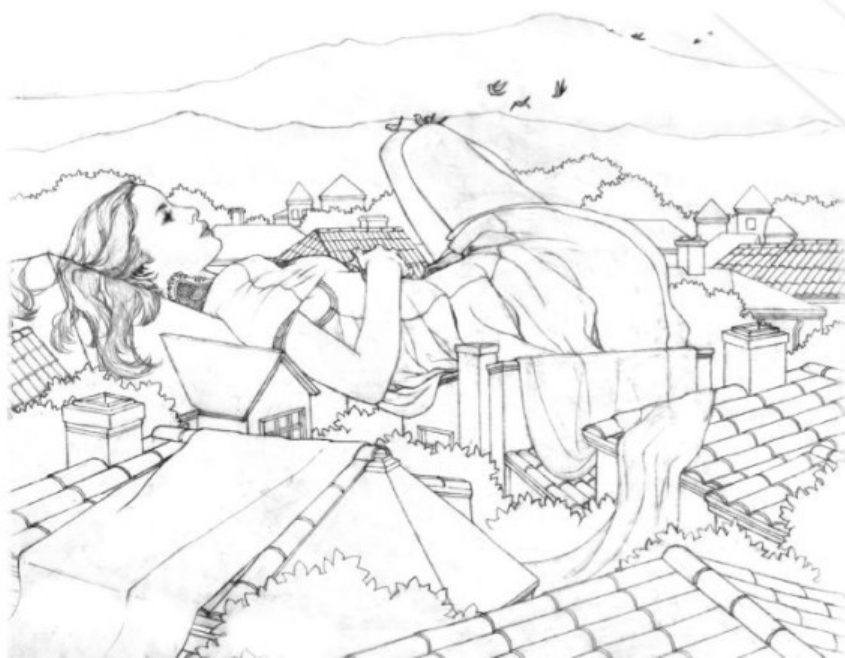
Wandering Across a Borrowed Belief

"One of the preliminaries for a two-person show I did at Thinkspace Gallery in California. The series emphasises mental rapture and turmoil."

❝ One of the preliminaries for a two-person show: the series emphasises mental rapture and turmoil ❞

Inspiration

ALEX STEAD

This storyboard artist's sketchbook features everything from street fashion to killer cyborgs.

Leg warmers

"The things I enjoyed drawing most in this sketch were her legs. It was remarkably liberating to suggest their form by just crudely sketching the topology of the bed covers."

I'll be back

"All my figurines have a dual purpose: they enable me to embrace my inner geek and serve as invaluable references. My Terminator statue is a great reference tool for clothing folds, casual jackets and biker boots, and to light figures dramatically."

Ink test

"I treated myself to a brush pen and some markers recently after being inspired by Alvin Lee's posts on Instagram and Whilce Portacio's on YouTube. This was a test for inking techniques and comic styling."

Novel approach

"A study for my graphic novel. I love drawing the characters for my novel because each of them represents an artistic love of mine – whether it be Americana, 1940s and 50s fashion, Art Nouveau, steampunk, sci-fi... you name it."

Dedicated follower of fashion

"My school teacher fashionista. My wife is always bringing back fashion magazines for me – she knows I love the reference. Inspired by some of my cuttings I'm starting to develop this 'paragon of virtue' for my novel."

Old school

"Vintage dresses exploration for schoolgirl character in my novel. A friend of mine has his own picture-framing business and gave me some throwaway mountboard, saying it was great to draw on. It is. And remarkably cheap, too, if you know the right people."

66 Mountboard is remarkably cheap if you know the right people 99

Inspiration

KIM JUNG GI

This artist has a string of viral videos to his name, each showing him spinning a web of interwoven drawings.

My world

"I was born in Goyang-Si, in the South Korean province of Kyongki-Do. This is part of a comic series about my neighbourhood. This is what it's really like. I saw it with my own eyes!"

Artist PROFILE

Kim Jung Gi
COUNTRY: South Korea

Kim's virtuoso drawing skills have made him a YouTube sensation. His time-lapse videos show the art and design graduate covering vast canvases in intricate freehand sketches.
www.kimjunggi.net

Speed drawing
"I have a lot of fun sketching at speed. This drawing, for example, took me just 40 minutes to complete."

❝ I have a lot of fun sketching at speed: this took 40 minutes ❞

My new book
"This drawing shows me receiving delivery of my 2013 sketchbook collection. It's the third one I've released. I hope it sells well…"
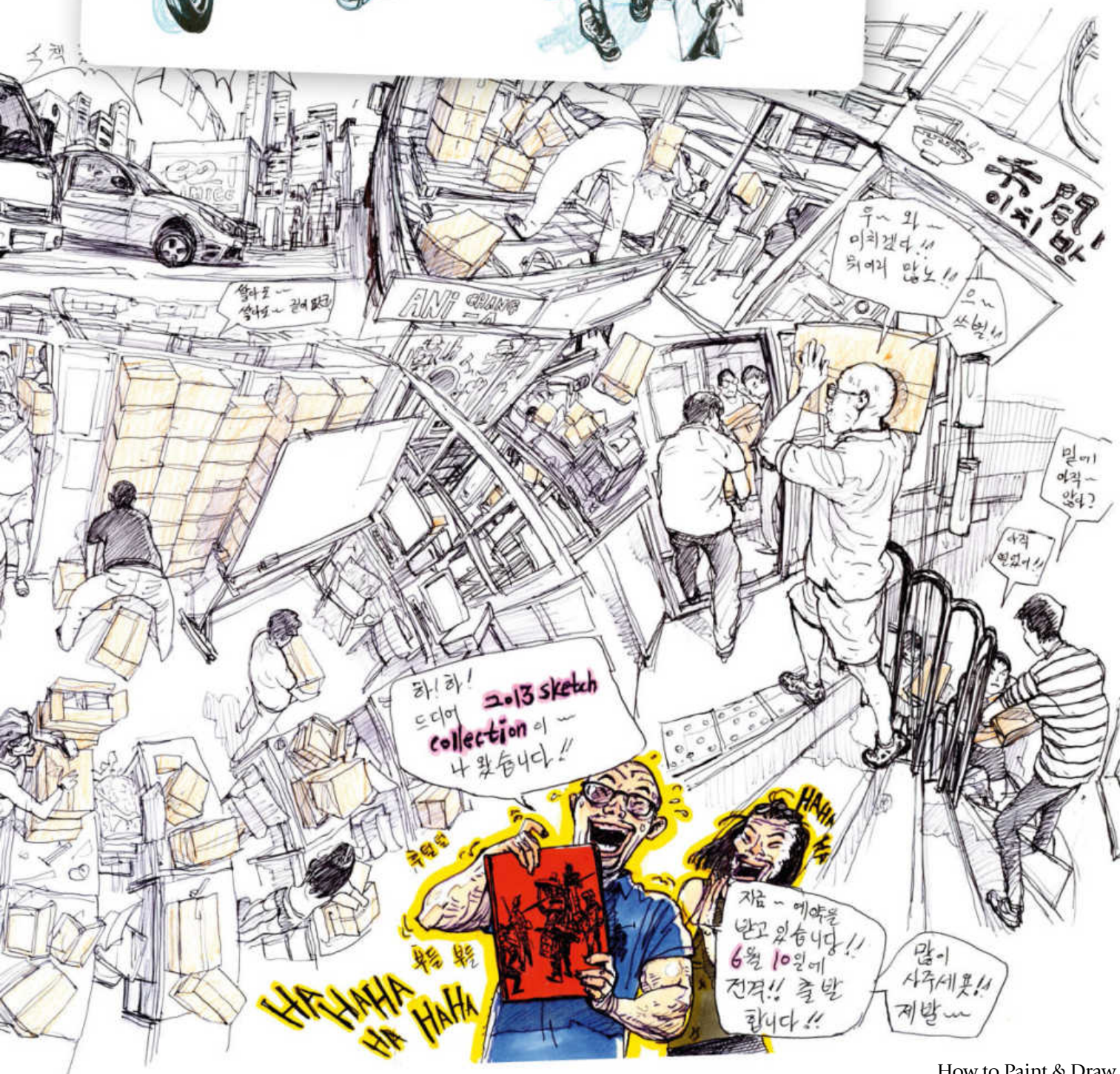
Inspiration

CHARLIE BOWATER

This concept artist reveals a series of character sketches that are both intimate and evocative.

Dance
"A little compilation sketch that's half-painting, half-sketch. This was based on rhythms and dancing after I ended up with a particular song stuck in my head."

> ❝ This was based on rhythms and dancing after I got a song stuck in my head ❞

Sarina concept
"Some early concept sketches for the design of Sarina, the young protagonist from Atomhawk's The Realm project."

Orchid
"This is a fun character study inspired by the Princess Amidala character from the Star Wars prequels."

Portrait

"I wanted to work some slight feline features, such as the nose and ears, into this character study."

Artist
PROFILE
Charlie Bowater
COUNTRY: England

Charlie lives in the north east of the UK. She works as a concept artist for Atomhawk by day and is a doodler of everything else by night.
charliebowater. wordpress.com

66 **I wanted to work some slight feline features into this character study** 99

PAINTING
CORE SKILLS

Core skills

HOW TO SET UP AN ART WORKSPACE

Before you start painting, you need to create a workspace.
DAVE KENDALL explains how what you'll need and how to go about it.

Preparation of a workspace is particularly important where paint is concerned. In part one of this article, I will give you a few tips based on my own experience to make your workspace and by extension your work comfortable and rewarding. In part two, over the page,

I'll cover what's needed to start you painting. Of course, painting materials and their uses could fill whole books, but this is intended as an appetiser.

In page three, on page 59, I'll give you a few pointers and tips for when you actually start painting. Think of it as an introduction rather than an in-depth treatise.

Although I love working digitally, I started off my art with traditional paints. For speed I mostly work with acrylics, but you can see me trying out Artisan Water Mixable Oils for the photography here.

Brynn works in both traditional and digital media on book covers, trading cards and comics: www.rustybaby.com.

Artist PROFILE

Dave Kendall
COUNTRY:
England

Dave is a familiar face to readers of ImagineFX. The Bristol-based artist began his career by illustrating book covers, and more recently has worked on trading cards and comics. He works in both traditional and digital media.
rustybaby.com

1: PREPARE YOUR SPACE

Make sure you're comfortable and have enough light – and don't forget storage!

1 *Make it comfortable*
If like me you never liked being told to tidy your room, it's best to find a space which doesn't need to be cleared up after you've finished a painting session. A corner of your room can work, or if you're blessed with plenty of room, a dedicated studio space. It's also essential that the area is well-lit. If you can find a north facing window, that would be ideal. But comfort is essential.

2 *Choose your surface*
Artists through the ages have painted on every surface and at all angles. I'll stick within 90 degrees for this introduction. I have an A0 draughtsman table, a table easel and a large, free-standing easel for my bigger paintings. You need to be able to see and have access to the whole surface of a painting. While the table and table top easel accommodate smaller illustrations, the large easel can carry paintings up to four or five feet.

TOOLS YOU'LL NEED

PENCILS Wooden and mechanical. Staedtler and Pentel.

ERASERS Malleable putty useful for removing graphite from most surfaces.

PENS I love the Faber-Castell art pens for line and wash.

PAPER AND HARD-BACK SKETCHBOOKS Rowney, Winsor & Newton, and Moleskine.

WATERCOLOUR PAPER I use Langton satin-smooth hot pressed for most of my work. Although any smooth watercolour paper can be used.

MASONITE Easily purchased and cut to size available from timber or hardware merchants.

CANVAS Can be bought ready or custom made from most art shops. With time and experience you will be able to create your own.

MAHL STICK I made mine myself. All that's needed is a firm piece of rounded dowling and a soft cushioned end.

ACRYLICS Liquitex and Finity from Winsor and Newton are the makes I use the most.

OILS Wide range from traditional oils to fast drying (griffin alkyd) and water mixable (Artisan).

WATERCOLOUR They come in tubes and as dry cake versions.

INKS Brilliant colour. Useful for glazing if dramatic colour is needed.

EASELS There are many types available; your choice should be based on how much room and money you have to spend.

PALETTES Tiles, plates, stay wet palettes for acrylic from Winsor & Newton and Daler-Rowney, traditional wooden palettes for oils.

BRUSHES Sceptre-gold synthetic/sable mix and Pro Arte for acrylic and oils. Isabey watercolour brushes are my favourite watercolour tools.

VARNISHES Gloss and matte. Liquitex are my favourite for acrylic.

3 Choose a map

I use an angle poise for most of my work. It doesn't matter how you get light on your work as long as it's good and strong. I always work with a blue-coated daylight bulb. Try using a normal bulb after using one and you will see how yellow the light is. Not only does it give you accurate colour, but it's also less tiring on your eyes. Once again, comfort comes into play.

4 Add some inspiration

This comes in the form of books and DVDs. I've been buying books from a very early age so my collection is pretty large. If I am feeling down or lacking in energy the images around me have never failed to pull me out of my slump.

5 Don't forget storage

You'll need somewhere to put your raw materials and finished paintings – safer than the floor. If you have room for a planning chest try to pick one up, though they are sought after so you may struggle. Make sure you protect your materials any way you can. A sturdy portfolio is always going to be useful as you'll need to transport the paintings around.
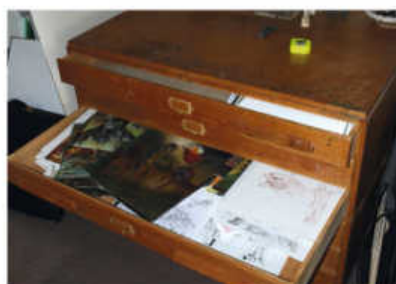
2: HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT MATERIALS

You'll need all these things before you start, or you won't get very far!

1 Sketching pencils

Ever since seeing Robert Crumb's beautiful sketchbooks I decided to try to apply similar values to my own sketching process. I work in hardbound books containing heavy cartridge paper. They will take pretty rough treatment from most media. When they're finished they get numbered and put on a shelf, which I use often as visual diaries. I have a personal preference for 2B pencils. I use mechanical and good old fashioned wooden versions.

2 Canvas and board

This is one area where I apply a do-it-yourself philosophy. I get masonite board cut to size at a local timber merchants. Using artist acrylic gesso I coat the board evenly with an ordinary house brush, leave to dry and then apply another coat in an opposite direction. Between coats I use wet and dry paper, which can be bought from any car accessory shop. This can give a very smooth surface to work on. It's very sturdy, forgiving, yet economical.

3 Paper

Another surface I use to paint on is hot-pressed watercolour paper. I stretch it by soaking it in a bath of water and then stick it to a sturdy board using gummed sealing tape. Once dry I coat it in a layer of Liquitex matte medium. This seals the paper to prevent the paint soaking into it and becoming dull. Can be used for oils or acrylics.

> 66 I find it's a false economy to buy cheap paints, though student-quality paints are okay if you are experimenting 99

4 Paints and mediums

I like to use good quality paints, such as Liquitex and Finity acrylics. They have a high pigment yield and therefore the colour is more intense. I find it's a false economy to buy cheap paints. If you are experimenting it doesn't hurt to go for student-quality paints, though.

5 Palettes

Palettes could be any smooth cleanable surface: plates, glass, the traditional wooden or the disposable paper versions. For acrylics I do use a stay wet palette, which keeps the paint workable. Acrylics dry to a plastic film very quickly without it. The paint can be a little liquefied using it so impasto can be difficult. Oils are different. They remain workable for days without any extra help.

6 Brushes

I always use good quality brushes. Although expensive they will serve you and your painting well with a little TLC. They keep their shape and ability to apply paint for longer than cheaper varieties. This is probably the most important purchase you'll make. For a comparison, think of the difference between graphics tablets. I use a selection of synthetic, bristle and sable. I suggest having different sets of brushes for each medium.

7 Palette knives and colour shapers

Other useful mark-making tools are palette knives and rubber tipped colour shapers. These tools apply paint in a totally different way. They enable you to place slabs of colour, and to pull grooves, and texture your paint. Imagine painting bark and rough surfaces using these devices. Palette knives come into their own with larger paintings on board. You need a sturdy support for this.

8 Cleaning materials

Good quality brushes and paints should provide you with plenty of good service. However it's vital that you clean your equipment, especially brushes, if you are using oils and acrylics. Using normal hardware store brush cleaner should save brushes that have dried dirty. Old and damaged brushes are always useful for rough work such as scumbling.

9 Colours

Most makes of paint have a huge range of colours, though over time you will develop a smaller range you'll use more than most. This is down to personal taste to a certain extent. For instance I particularly like the phthalo blues. As you become more experienced you'll find that you'll be able to get a wide range of mix from just a few core colours.

10 Varnishes and protection

Although not strictly vital, varnishes fulfil an important last stage. When your painting is dry you'll find that the surface has different textures such as gloss and matte and colour intensities because of this. Varnish equalises and protects the surface. Gloss uniformly intensifies the colour while matte prevents reflections and is useful if you wish to photograph or scan the painting.

3: PAINTING POINTERS

Tips and advice for when you're ready to start painting

1 General principles

Experiment with as many different techniques and media as possible. Choose your media to suit your subject matter. This is the first time I have used Artisan Water Mixable Oils. I found them to be rather nice to work with. You have the advantages of oils but without the need for spirits and solvents. They have buttery and smooth consistency, with the extended drying time of oils.

2 Foundation work

I never work from white when using oils or acrylics. Create an underpainting establishing shadows and values with burnt umber or a mix of burnt sienna and phthalo blues. Acrylics are probably best at this stage as they're quick-drying and permanent. You can use almost any media on top of acrylic, but not oils. Work paint up from thin to thick, especially when using slow drying paints. It's impossible to work on top of heavy, wet paint. In the same way, work up to highlights, adding the brightest and usually heavier paint at the end. Have a roll of kitchen towel to clean brushes and take excess paint off the surface if a mistake is made.

3 Brush types

Brushes come in a number of shapes and with different fibre types. Combinations of these will give very different results. The key is to try all of them as you paint. The most versatile of these are the synthetic/ sable mix. These brushes can be used with most of the different paint types. Brushes come in flat and round types and it pays to have a selection of both. I work with a range of brushes. For most of the early work I find myself using larger flatter and broader brushes. A filbert is a good general brush for blocking in form and paint. It has a dual nature combining the aspects of flat and round brushes so can cover detail as well as larger areas. I find myself using smaller brushes only at the end of the painting process.

> **❝ A filbert is a good general brush for blocking in form and paint. It has a dual nature and can cover detail as well as larger areas ❞**

4 Texture

Have a dry flat brush that you can use to blend and create smooth transitions. I do tend to like lots of texture and like to see brush marks in my own work. Almost anything can be used to add texture to your paint. There are ready-made texture media available, but I have seen items such as egg shell and sand used to add interest to a painting. Use an old toothbrush to spatter your image with paint. This can be remarkably effective at suggesting noise and grain.

5 Dry brush

This is a method of applying colour I use that only partially covers a previously dried layer. You should use very little paint on the brush and apply it with very quick, directional strokes. This method tends to work best when applying light paint over dark areas/dried paint and is useful in depicting rock and grass textures.

6 Less is more

Removing paint can be as important as applying it. Sgraffito is the term used when you scratch away paint while it's wet to expose the underpainting. It's especially useful when depicting scratches, hair, grasses and the like. You can use almost any pointed object for this. In the Death Dealer painting I use rubber shaping tools or the end of a brush to create scratches through wet paint, for battle-worn armour or similar textures.

7 Glazing

The process of laying a coat of transparent paint over a dry part of the painting. Used for intensifying shadows and modulating colour. A light transparent blue over dry yellow will of course create green. Use successive glazes repeatedly.

8 Painting Mediums

Mediums are fluids that can be added to paint to modulate their consistency, drying time and texture. In the case of acrylics you get different mediums that make the paint matte or gloss. However my greatest use of matte medium is sealing paper and board, so paint doesn't soak into it.

Core skills

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PAINTBRUSHES

Are you using the right brushes for the art you want to create?
CHRIS LEGASPI explains how to make the most of your trip to the art store.

To simplify the process of choosing my paintbrushes, I make two major distinctions. The first is by the type of hair the brush is made of, and second is the shape.

There are two types of hair that make up brushes: bristle or sable. Bristle is a rough, coarse hair. They can be made from animal hair such as hog, or can be synthetic. Bristles generally make rougher marks, where the stroke can be easily seen.

Sables have softer and finer hairs. Like bristles, sables can be made from animal hair such as a mink or mongoose, or synthetic. They make smooth and soft marks which can't be easily seen.

The next major distinction I make in choosing paintbrushes is by shape.

The three most common shapes are round, flat or filbert.

Round brushes come to a point. Rounds can create a variety of marks, but I enjoy rounds for drawing with oils and making drawing type marks.

Flat brushes have a rectangular shape. Flats are great for making square shaped marks. I enjoy flats for modeling forms and covering large areas.

Filbert is somewhere between a flat and a round. It is wide and square at the base, but the tip comes to a point like a round Filberts create a wide range of marks. Because of their versatility, filberts were great to practice with when I first began painting in oils.

The best way to choose brushes is to just try the various shapes. For example, you could start with only bristle rounds. Then, try and paint with only flats, and then finally filberts.

It takes time to become familiar with the various shapes. After many paintings, I soon realized what my shape preference was and and now I'm comfortable working with a variety of brush shapes in both bristle and sable hairs.

Chris is obsessed with figure drawing and painting. He also loves sharing great information on art and picture making. www.freshdesigner.com.

> ❝ **Sables can be made from animal hair such as mink or mongoose, or synthetic. They make smooth, soft marks that can't be easily seen** ❞

20 STEPS TO THE PERFECT SET

Learn about the different kinds of brushes and put together a set that works for you.

1 Two types of hair

The first way I categorize brushes is by the type of hair they use. The two main types of hair are bristle (A) and sable (B). Both come in many different shapes and sizes, and can be made either from natural animal hair or synthetic fiber. I generally use bristles for rougher marks and sables for smoother strokes.

2 Bristle brushes

Bristle brushes are made of thicker, stronger and sometimes rougher hair. They originally came from animals such as wild hogs, but now synthetic bristle brushes are very common. Bristles are great because they can hold a lot of paint. I use bristles to do the bulk of my painting, especially when covering large areas.

3 Bristle marks

Here is an example of some marks made with bristle brushes. Bristle marks tend to be rougher and the paint strokes can be easily seen. These are often called "painterly" strokes. I like the rough look for adding texture and variety to my paintings. I also like bristles for making drawing type marks because of their stiffness and durability.

4 Sable brushes

Sable brushes are generally made of finer and softer hair. Sables can be made from soft animal hair such as a mongoose or mink, or from soft synthetic fibers. I like sables mostly for blending edges and creating softer and more subtle marks. I also enjoy using smaller sables for adding fine details and finishing touches..

ALL IN THE HAIRS

WHEN TO CHOOSE NATURAL OR SYNETHETIC.

Brush hairs can either be made from natural hairs or synthetic hairs. Natural hairs (A) come from animals like horse, hog, mink or mongoose. Synthetic hairs (B) can be made from a variety of materials but some form of nylon is the most common found in paint brushes. With technology, synthetic fibers have the ability to mimic the feel of many natural, animal hair brushes. This is great for artists' because natural hair brushes can cost much more than synthetic. That is main difference in my mind between natural and synthetic is the price. For this reason, I generally recommend students or beginners to start with synthetic brushes. I have used synthetic for many years now and continue to enjoy their feel and performance.

5 Sable marks

Here is an example of some marks made by sable brushes. Sables make very clean marks and the paint strokes tend to be hidden. Because of this sables are great for achieving a more "realistic" look in a painting. I like to use sables for making soft, airbrush like marks and for blending.

6 Three brush shapes

The next way I categorize brushes is by shape. The three most common shapes are: flat (A), filbert (B) and round (C). All three shapes can come in both bristle and sable hair. They also come in many different sizes. It took me years of practice and experience to decide which shape worked best for me.

7 Round brushes

The first common brush shape is round. Round brushes are shaped like sharp tear drops or large needles. I like to use rounds for drawing and making drawing like marks. I'll often begin my paintings with a small round brush to draw with, and then use larger rounds to fill larger areas.

8 Flat brushes

The next common brush shape is flat. Flat brushes have a rectangular shape. Flat brushes make square shaped marks. They can also make chisel like lines, especially when using a sable flat. I use flats mostly to model form. There square shaped marks are great for defining planes and form in a figure or portrait painting..

9 *Filbert brushes*
The final most common brush shape is filbert. Filberts are combination of both round and flat. The have the rectangular shape of a flat brush, but also come to a point like a round brush. Because of their unique shape, filberts can create a wide variety of marks. I use filberts for many painting tasks including blending edges.

10 *Round bristle brush marks*
Here are some examples of marks made by round bristle brush. Rounds can create a variety of marks. Like a pencil or marker, they can also go thick to thin. Because the shape resembles a pencil, I like making drawing and hatching marks with round bristles. I almost always start every painting with a round bristle.

CLEANING BRUSHES

HOW TO KEEP YOUR BRUSHES IN GOOD SHAPE.

Cleaning brushes regularly keeps them in good condition so that they work better and of course last longer. There are many ways to clean and wash brushes. At the art store, there many products to choose from. The solution I've used for many years now is the 'Old Masters' hand cleaning soap. Called 'artists' soap, it is mostly used for cleaning oil paint off hands and clothing, but it is also a great brush cleaner. It is not as gentle as other cleaners, but when used with care it cleans bristle and even soft sables very very well. It is also great because it saves on the cost of buying a separate brush cleaner and hand cleaner product.

11 *Round sable brush marks*
Here are some examples of marks made by round sable brush. Sables have finer and softer hair and they also retain their shape well. I use round sables for a variety of tasks including blending edges and for fine details. Small sable rounds are my favorite brushes for adding small details.

12 *Flat bristle brush marks*
Here are some examples of marks made by flat bristle brush. I love the square shaped marks for painting planes on forms. When I paint figures or portraits I do most of the work with a flat bristle brush. I also like the way the paint strokes are very visible with bristle brushes.

13 *Flat sable brush marks*
Here are some examples of marks made by flat sable brush. A sable flat can make square shaped marks, but with a much cleaner edge. The rough, painterly edge is gone, but instead is replaced by smooth and polished look. I use sable flats for blending edges and making softer strokes on a portrait or figure.

14 *Filbert bristle brush marks*
Here are some examples of marks made by filbert bristle brush. Filberts can create a wide variety of marks, from thick to thin and back again. Because of their versatility, they are great for drawing and for painting the head or figure. I use filbert bristles to add variety and texture to my paintings.

15 Filbert sable brush marks

Here are some examples of marks made by filbert sable brush. Like the bristle version, sable filberts can also make a wide variety of marks. Sometimes it feels like drawing with ink or charcoal. I like to use filbert sables for both making crisp, drawing marks and edges and also for blending edges.

16 Large brushes

Larger brushes are almost always flat shaped and made from bristle since bristle holds more paint. Large brushes like these (A) come in 1/2 inch to 1 inch in size. The large long handle flat (B) is a size 12. I use large brushes for painting large areas, but also for applying gesso and varnish.

ANYTHING CAN BE A BRUSH

TRY USING AN OLD SPONGE OR TOOTHBRUSH.

Almost anything can be used as a brush. Anything that can hold an amount of paint and can make a mark can be used. One of the most common items that is often used is the ordinary toothbrush. A toothbrush can make a variety of marks, from rough and textural to cool splatter techniques. Another commonly found item used for painting is the ordinary, household sponge. Sponges can be used to make a variety of textural marks. That's the beautiful thing about painting, there are really no rules. I often save my old toothbrushes and sponges for painting which is another way to save on cost of new materials.

17 Small detail brushes

Small detail brushes are almost always made from sable hair, because they retain their stiffness and shape well. Small brushes can go from size 1 to 00, or even to a single hair! I use small sable brushes like these for adding fine details, but also for blending edges in small forms.

18 My personal brush set

After painting a few years I've settled on the sizes and shapes that work for me. This is my personal brush set for painting indoor subjects like figures and portraits. For brushes that do most of the work, I have two of each size. I also work mostly in bristle, using small sables for detail and blending.

MY BEST BRUSH

MY FAVOURITE BRUSH, AND WHY I LIKE IT.

If I could choose only one brush to use, it would probably be a round bristle brush. Round brushes are very versatile if used with creativity and lots of practice. A round brush can be make wide range of marks. For example, when painting with the long end of the brush, the mark can simulate a flat brush or filbert. When pressing down while making strokes, the mark can also look like a flat mark. And othing is better for making lines and drawing marks than a small round brush. So if I were in a tight budget, and could only use a limited number of brushes, I would choose rounds.

19 Range of tools

After experimenting with several brushes for painting outdoors and landscapes, I've settled on this set of brushes. I do most of the work with bristle flats so I carry two of each size. I have a small round for drawing and a large round for large areas. The small round sables are for adding details and finishing touches.

20 Three of the best

If I was on a tight budget and could only use 2 or 3 brushes, these are the brushes I would use. A size 4-6 flat (A) will accomplish many painting tasks and a size 2-3 round (B) will complement the flat well. I would also add a slightly larger 6-8 flat (C) for covering larger areas quickly.

Core skills

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PAPER

Discovering a new type of paper can change the way you think about your painting and improve your results, explains KEVIN CROSSLEY.

Throughout this article we'll explore a selection of the most frequently used sorts of paper, board and card that are available.

Making sure you choose the right sort of paper might seem one an obvious consideration, but for those just starting out or starting again after time away, it's a question that can easily be overlooked.

For example, it wasn't until my second year as a professional illustrator that I discovered something called 'Bristol Board'. I was introduced to it by friends who were comic book artists, and as soon as I began drawing on it I realised there was so much I didn't know about my craft.

It was a revelation. It isn't enough to be able to draw well, you have to bolster that with a solid understanding of all the peripheral stuff too: materials, equipment and of course, the stuff you draw on.

It still seems strange to think how discovering a type of paper would change the way I thought about my work, and similar discoveries continue to benefit my art in ways I could never have imagined back when I was starting out.

When choosing the right sort of paper for a project there are several factors you'll probably want to take into account...

What will the subject matter be? How much detail will be included in the image? Are there any textural effects you might want to achieve? And of course, what medium will you use?

To fully explore all such considerations would require a much longer article than we have room for here, so for the sake of simplicity this feature will mainly focus on the media factor.

Similarly I'll refrain from getting carried away describing the many specific kinds (and brands) of art paper available. The focus here will be intentionally broad; offering an informative overview of what is potentially a far-reaching subject.

Kevin Crossley is a fantasy artist who has a taste for the weird. He works in both traditional and digital media to produce his Lovecraftian work: www.kevcrossley.com.

> **It isn't enough to be able to draw well, you have to bolster that with a solid understanding of all the peripheral stuff too**

GET TO KNOW THE DIFFERENT TYPES

There's an almost bewildering array of paper types out there. Here's how to narrow your choice down.

MATERIALS

TYPES COVERED
- Multi-purpose paper
- Hot-pressed paper
- Cold-pressed paper
- Bristol Board
- Coloured paper
- Watercolour paper
- Canvas and canvas board
- Textured art board/mounted board

1 *Paper pads*
Go to any store selling art materials and you'll find shelf upon shelf of all sorts of books and pads filled with all kinds of paper and card. These are useful to stock up with and easy to store, a great advantage if you're short of room. The uniform sizes mean you'll never make a cutting error either. They're also great value.

2 *The pros to multi-purpose paper*
The first professional illustration I did was produced on cheap photocopying paper. With no-one to advise me I simply used what was at hand. At 80gsm, this paper is thin and light, and takes 4H to HB pencil quite well as long as you don't press too hard. Drawing pens work well with it too. It's the best value all-round sketching paper you can buy.

3 *The cons to multi-purpose paper*
Because of the light 80gsm weight, multipurpose photocopier paper will buckle easily if darker (B) pencil grades are applied heavily. This can be a problem if you need to scan the art into the computer as the non-uniform surface reflects the scanner light, causing unwanted 'shine' patches in the scanned art. It is also rather useless for painting on, and will rip easily when wet.

4 *Drawing papers*
There is an astonishingly vast range of basic drawing paper types to choose from. This stuff is the bread & butter of any traditional artist and is available in all weights, colours and finishes. The first quality paper I used at school was called cartridge paper (it was initially used to make old rifle cartridges). Its weight and slight roughness made it perfect for sketching, but I soon discovered other choices.

5 *Hot pressed paper*
Although I want to avoid terminology for the most part, there are a couple of terms you might come across with regards paper. Hot pressed paper has a smooth, clean surface that makes it ideal for pencil sketching and drawings with lots of shading. It also takes ink from a pen or small brush very well, and is ideal for detailed work.

6 *Cold pressed paper*
Cold pressed paper has a rougher surface. This is known as 'grain' or 'tooth', and although it can result in some wonderful, textural pencil work, it really is better suited to heavier grade pencil sketching (4B and above). Darker, media such as charcoal and pastels really do need a rough, textured surface to hold them in place. It's also suitable for light watercolour washes and less refined ink work.

7 *A note about pastels, charcoal and chalk*
Pastels, chalk and charcoal need a surface with greater stability than a smooth or fine grain option, or the pigment can easily dislodge or 'slip'. These sludgy drawings only look worse as they age. My art college folder is awash in old pastel and chalk dust that's become dislodged and fallen away from the artwork. A heavy 'toothed' paper is essential, as it gives pastels and their ilk something to cling to.

8 *Bristol Board*
Bristol Board has become my favourite paper for finished drawing. The sort I use has a 115 lbs weight that allows for repeated erasing and also goes through a printer with ease. The surface is extra smooth and is perfect for pencils, drawing pens, airbrushing and light washes. A versatile, high quality paper I can't recommend highly enough.

CHEAPER OPTIONS

YOU CAN USE ANYTHING TO CREATE ART...

The stuff you choose to draw, paint or daub upon can be the most crucial of decisions, depending on what media you want to use. It can also be of no consequence at all if you need to grab the first thing to hand in order to get an idea down quickly, or perhaps you're simply not that fussy. Whatever the case, it's possible to make a piece of art on just about anything. (No doubt many great works began as hasty sketches on the back of an envelope or a soggy cardboard coaster in a bar.) A great resource can be found when recycling furniture. The bottoms of old drawers are great to paint on. A layer of primer makes them perfect for acrylics or oils. While it *is* good sense to buy the best materials you can afford, don't ignore stuff you can get for free.

Core skills

DO YOUR RESEARCH

THE WEB CAN HELP YOU, BUT DON'T OVERDO IT...

Learning which sort of paper or card to match with a particular medium can be fun in and of itself, but it can also become tedious and even frustrating if the results you achieve fall short of your expectations due to inappropriate paper choices. For some, trial and error will teach what works and what doesn't, but having some knowledge up-front can be invaluable, and save a lot of time too. In this age of the internet, it has never been easier or quicker to find information, tips and advice for all your art related queries, so make good use of it. Be selective though: although the web is a great resource, the sheer volume of material might easily overwhelm; the last thing you want is to lose a day to the internet which could have been spent in front of the drawing board.

9 Painting on Bristol Board

Bristol Board also lends itself to coloured inks and acrylics, if you use a strong adhesive to stick it to thick card. I find the backing board of a drawing pad is perfect. This gives the paper extra strength and durability, and eliminates any buckling or blistering the application of wet washes would bring about. It's also a great way of making use of something that might otherwise be thrown away.

10 Coloured paper

Working on coloured or tinted paper or card is something quite special. If you start a drawing on, for example, a medium grey paper, you have the opportunity to work up to lights as well as down to darks. The same principle applies when painting with acrylics or oils over a mid-toned 'under-painting' – so developing this skill will have benefits in other areas, too.

11 Coloured paper: balancing tone

Pastels and pencil crayons work well with lighter coloured papers, but you must choose the colours carefully. Working on coloured paper provides a solid tonal 'average' around which you can build a more balanced set of values in your image. A simple pencil drawing on tinted brown, grey or eggshell toned paper, bolstered with white pencil crayon, can be breathtaking too.

12 Coloured paper: negative space

Drawing (or painting) light onto dark in this way is also a great way of defining 'negative space', a counter intuitive way of working, especially for the beginner but one which can help to broaden the way you see space in the world around you. White chalk on black paper is the most extreme approach, and can result in dramatic pieces.

13 Watercolour paper

Watercolour paper is available in a range of weights, as sheets or in books. The lighter weighted paper can even be fed through a home printer. Paper with a medium grain is suitable for light watercolour washes, dry brushing and light acrylic or gouache. It is also perfect for pastels, charcoal and coloured crayons.

14 Watercolour paper: texture benefits

Courser grain papers with a 'heavy tooth' tend to be exclusively used with watercolours. The little pits and indentations across the surface of the paper are perfect for holding heavy washes in place, and when dry the texture looks fantastic. It isn't ideal for pastels or heavy oils as the pits can resist being filled with pigment, and the resulting speckle of 'blank paper' is probably not a desirable outcome.
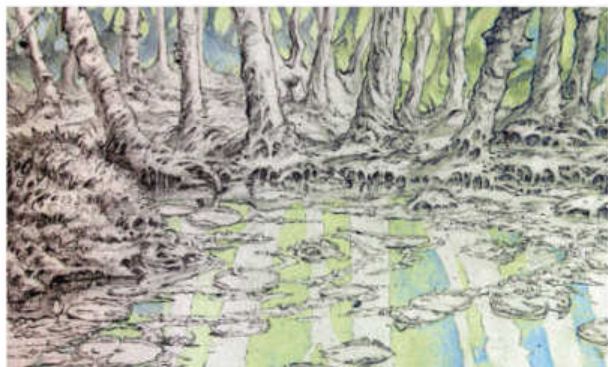
15 Watercolour paper: for drawing

Although paper with grain isn't best suited for straightforward pencil drawing, it can still have its uses in this regard. A textured paper surface always looks great in the finished image, but if you want to achieve fine detailed line-work, anything above a B will tend to smudge and lose definition quite easily. I find that a 2H pencil, emboldened with HB, brings spectacular results on watercolour paper.

16 Watercolour paper: coloured

It can be tricky to track down, but coloured or tinted watercolour paper adds an extra dimension to your painting. If you can find it, look for pale blue, subtle green and grey. My favourite was always a warm creamy-ochre colour. Painting on coloured, textured paper immediately defines a tone range, and if you choose colours to complement the paper colour, it helps to blend and bind those colours.

17 A note about watercolours

Watercolours are best used sparingly in lots of water. This application of water tinted with pigment is called a 'wash'. The beauty of watercolours is their translucency, which allows light to penetrate the painting before being reflected back by the paper beneath. This gives the colours extra depth and vibrant shine. It might sound obvious, but try to resist using too much pigment in your watercolour washes.

18 Textured art board/mounting board

I know artists who buy the cheapest mounting board they can find, then paint on the back. This is an affordable way of producing large paintings in acrylics or oils, and as mounting board is very thick it provides a stable, strong base on which to work. You can also find similarly weighted textured art board. It's more expensive but offers a range of finishes, from smooth to rough grain.

19 Canvas and canvas board

And then there is canvas. This material has a surface texture that is unmistakeable, and is available pre-stretched onto a wide range of frames of all sizes and shapes. It is often pre-treated with 'primer' too, which gives the paint something to adhere to. Canvas is also available attached to thick board and is the ideal choice when you're using oils or acrylics.

20 Experimentation

Experimentation can be tremendously helpful in discovering all sorts of unforeseen tricks and techniques. Despite the sound advice in an article such as this, it's still worth playing around with different sorts of papers and mediums, as you might discover something that no-one else has. After all, if necessity is the mother of invention, then serendipity must be its father... ●

PAPER WEIGHT

JUST LIKE SIZE, WEIGHT IS IMPORTANT

When selecting paper, weight is an important factor when planning a drawing or painting. Too lightweight and it will disintegrate under wet paint, and if you're out and about you don't want to be weighed down with a bag full of heavy art board. As a rough guide, anything under 90lbs is perfect for sketching, but if you anticipate repeated erasing you'd be better with 100lbs and above to ensure the paper surface doesn't start to 'roll up' and rub away (essential for those frustrating formative years). 125lbs and above will accommodate wet washes quite happily too, although stretching and pre-wetting would be beneficial, too.

SURFACE TEXTURE

THREE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

In a nutshell, these are the points you need to know about the surface texture of different papers:
● Smooth paper is best for fine, sharp pencils and drawing pens. Medium grain paper is good for pastels, chalks and crayons and a coarse grain surface is ideal for watercolours.
● Pencils can be used on rough grain, but the pits make it difficult to get detail into the artwork, and I've found that it encourages smudging, too.
● You'll see the term 'Acid Free' frequently used on the covers of many sketchpads. This means any artwork produced on it will not degrade over time.

Core skills

HOLDING YOUR BRUSH & MAKING STROKES

Could holding your paintbrushes differently help improve your art? Painting is something you need to put your whole body into, explains KEVIN CROSSLEY.

On the face of it, holding a brush and making marks with it should be fairly simple. You pick it up using your fingers, you dip it in paint then daub that paint onto paper. Job done surely? Well, not quite...

Back in my youth I remember putting a lot of concentration into how to hold my brush and where on the image I should apply it first. It certainly seemed like more of an issue back then, so I've approached this article as my 16 year old self might have done.

The older, wiser me now knows that it's not only about how you grip the brush, but how you use your hand, your wrist, your arm, shoulder, and indeed your whole body while painting.

When considered in this way, the question becomes much larger in scope, and in this article we'll explore some of the obvious issues, as well as addressing some less obvious ones.

I'll start with this observation: the physical nature of traditional art practice is, I'd argue, exactly what makes it so valuable as an activity.

Art can become a physically demanding workout as you spend hours moving around a painting, and the immersive process of mixing colours and applying them to the paper can also induce different states of mind.

This also brings to mind debates about the principal differences between digital and traditional art, and how important it is to keep the traditional methods alive and

vibrantly kicking, despite some beneficial applications the computer can offer.

So over the next few pages we take a fresh look at how to hold a brush and make strokes. With luck, you'll come away with not only some good practical tips, but also some food for thought. Intrigued? Then read on...

Kevin Crossley is a fantasy artist who has a taste for the weird. He works in both traditional and digital media to produce his Lovecraftian work: www.kevcrossley.com.

> **It's not only about how you grip a brush, but how you use your hand, your wrist, your arm, shoulder, and indeed your whole body**

20 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR TECHNIQUE

Follow this advice to improve the way you wield your paintbrush and make strokes.

TOPICS COVERED

THINGS TO TRY
- Dabbing and daubing
- Splattering and spraying
- Looser strokes
- Different grips
- Varying your stroke style

THINGS TO AVOID
- Static technique
- Overstrokes

1 *Don't paint from the knuckles*
Painting beginners often betray their lack of experience by using quite a static brush technique (I certainly used to). Looking back, I can remember how I would 'paint from the knuckles'. This means the side of my hand would rest, largely unmoving on the surface of the paper, while the only part of my hand that was actually mobile was the ends of my fingers, below the knuckles.

2 *Influences on your stroke style*
Brush size and the size of your paper will both influence the way you make strokes. This badger was painted in my tiny sketch pad after I saw the animal disappear into a hedge. The brush was so small I had to pinch it between thumb and forefinger, making strokes by moving the ends of my fingers while resting my palm on my knee. Not ideal, but it got the job done.

3 Avoid overstrokes

The most common way artists hold a brush is between thumb, index and middle fingers, as you would a pencil. How you make a stroke depends on how much control you have over such a small action. It's easy to 'over stroke' at first, jumping over lines and making a bit of a mess, so it's worth taking a little time each day to practise your technique. (Practice really does make perfect.)

4 Try different techniques

Of course there are numerous other ways to hold a brush. Larger brushes can be gripped in the fist (great for aggressive strokes). Holding the brush near the other end can inspire lighter, less nuanced brush work, and holding it as you would the handle of a pan is great for flicking paint at the paper. You can even hold multiple brushes if you like: nothing is out of bounds.

5 Clean marks

Here is an example of some marks made by sable brushes (see page 60 for more on the different types of brushes). Sables make very clean marks and the paint strokes tend to be hidden. Because of this, sables are great for achieving a more "realistic" look in a painting. I like to use them for making soft, airbrush-like marks and for blending.

6 Dabbing and daubing

One of the most versatile brush strokes to utilise is dabbing or daubing instead of regular brushing. Depending how far you take it, this can result in terrific, impressionistic paintings, although it can become time consuming. Take a medium, round headed brush, dip the tip in paint then just dab it onto the paper.

7 Splatters and sprays

I've used my trusty old toothbrush for over 20 years. This cheap, effective tool is perfect for creating splatters and sprays. Simply dip in paint then flick the bristles with a finger. Loading the brush with lots of paint will create large, messy splats, but if the bristles are dipped in drier paint, the effect will be a much finer spray. To get the best results, enthusiastic experimentation is essential.

8 Looser strokes

After you've spent some time doing fine detail work it helps to do something less focused in order to blow off steam. I used a large brush, held three-quarters of the way up the handle, to do this abstract acrylic painting. This made for a much looser brush stroke. I used the other end of the brush to score lines around the blue boxes, so it was a real mix of techniques.

CLEANING BRUSHES

KEEPING YOUR BRUSHES IN SHAPE

Cleaning brushes regularly keeps them in good condition so that they work better and of course last longer. There are many ways to clean and wash brushes. At the art store, there many products to choose from. The solution I've used for many years now is the 'Old Masters' hand cleaning soap. Called 'artists' soap, it is mostly used for cleaning oil paint off hands and clothing, but it is also a great brush cleaner. It's not as gentle as other cleaners, but when used with care it cleans bristle and even soft sables very well. It also saves on the cost of buying a separate brush cleaner and hand cleaner product.

9 Using a brush backwards

When using thick paint like acrylic or oils, you can use sharp, pointed or shaped tools to scrape the paint off the canvas. However, sometimes it's easier to simply spin the brush around, and use the 'non-bristle' end to scratch into the paint while it's still wet. The textural effects are variable, but always interesting, and you can add more paint, then scratch off again and again.

10 Contrasting brush techniques

Swapping between contrasting brush styles not only helps keep your painting skills keen, but can be fun too. This painting of blossom (above) I painted in about 15 minutes using large, flat brushes. I scuffed the leaves on with a toothbrush, and daubed the blossom petals with blobs of white and pink.

11 Knowing when to quit

Intensive painting with tiny brushes without much hand movement can have a negative effect on your work. In this painting of dormice, my process became so tight and focussed, all the life was sucked out of it. I looked at the painting one day, and felt no eagerness to re-engage with it. So I abandoned it, and started to re-evaluate how I was holding and using my brushes.

12 Part of a bigger picture

Inspiration from all sorts of sources can help to influence how you might hold your paintbrush and make marks with it. It can be found in art history obviously, but also in other places you might not expect. This painting of a Native American totem figure mixed fine line-work with wet-wash daubs to represent the carved, faceted character of the statue.

13 Engage your body

How you hold a brush relates to not just the hand. Try moving your whole hand from the wrist while painting and see how that changes your strokes. Then try 'painting from your elbow', or even start your stroke at the shoulder. As you increase your movements in this way while working, it will liberate your mark-making; adding much more energy and vibrant action to your brush strokes.

14 Varying your strokes

Sometimes it's good to paint in broad strokes, but sometimes it pays to attend to the finer details. This painting of a basset hound is a mixture of the two. The face and head were painted using a small brush making tiny strokes, but the rest of it was painted using larger brushes in wider strokes. This helps maintain focus only where you need it.

15 *A digital perspective*

Over the past few decades digital art has enjoyed an unprecedented rise in popularity, and in some fields traditional art has become a novelty. I steadfastly continued using real paints, as I enjoyed the act of making actual brush strokes too much. That said, computers do have their uses. This image features entirely hand-painted acrylic paint, but was 'reconstructed' in the computer.

16 *Digital inspiration*

Computer art can also prove to be a useful source of inspiration. This photograph has had various 'filters' applied which try to emulate different traditional techniques, including watercolours and dry-brushing etc. Such experiments are quick to carry out and can provide interesting reference, or give you a starting point for devising actual brush strokes and mark-making

17 *Escape your comfort zone*

Working outside your comfort zone is the best way of ensuring your painting technique doesn't get rusty or boring. After I'd been using watercolours for a while I switched to coloured inks, think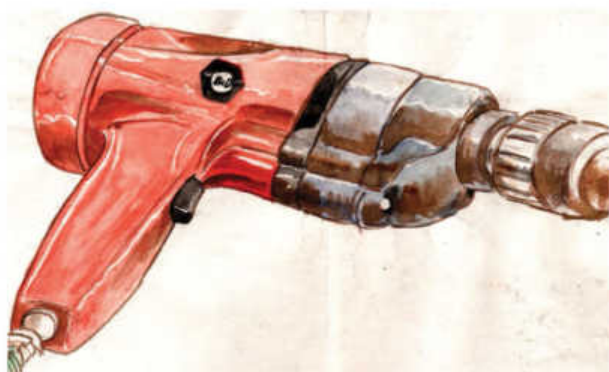ing they would be similar. It was a shock to learn how quickly they dried. This created unwanted 'hard edges' around the washes, but it was a great test of skill trying to master them.

18 *Do things differently*

Working in ways you're not used to prevents complacency, as seen in these images which were the result of a challenge from a college friend. My task she set me was to do quick sketches in biro pen – paint them using a child's paint but using her make-up 'pad' instead of a brush. I was allowed no more than two minutes per sketch – which may explain the results!

19 *Get outisde*

This painting was done while sitting on the side of a hill. The dark streaks in the sky were sheets of rain; a deluge which soon came overhead and 'blessed' my painting. I didn't need to use my bottle of water after that. The weather added atmosphere to my brush strokes, both metaphorically and literally. However, the end result was rather rushed – you can no doubt imagine why!

20 *Keep experimenting*

The key is to keep experimenting and pushing yourself. This was a school homework project. I used a dip-pen and fine brush to paint the view in Indian ink. I tried to keep the fine strokes as sketchy as possible. I then quickly added washes of colour in broad strokes using a limited palette. I was experimenting with my brush techniques at the time, and I still use some of them to this day..

OTHER OPTIONS

YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE BRUSHES

Brushes are not the only tool to make strokes with. The humble toothbrush is a commonly used substitute, plus there are any number of things you could use as well, or instead. Palette knives or small trowels are often used in oil or acrylic painting to scrape and shape thick scoops of paint over the canvas: you could also use lumps of wood or strips of thick card. Sponges, tissues, rags, paint rollers or even your fingers can all be used. An interesting exercise involves painting outdoors but not taking any brushes with you. Instead you use whatever you can find while you're there; clumps of grass, sticks, moss, a cow tail – anything at all.

MASTER YOUR EQUIPMENT

KEEP REFINING YOUR TOOLKIT

If you're a beginner, it might seem tempting to buy as much stuff as you can. While it's certainly true that I have around 40 brushes I choose from, and enough paint, tools and equipment to open a small shop, this is the result of nearly 30 years of producing art. When I started, I had a set of 12 watercolour tubes, eight coloured inks and four brushes. That was all I needed to get started, and it was only after I felt confident using all this that I began to buy a few more items. In short; keep it simple, and keep your options concise. The last thing you need when trying to master your brush technique is to be overawed by a bewildering array of painting tools.

Core skills

HOW TO CORRECTLY MIX PAINTS

KEVIN CROSSLEY introduces the basics of colour theory, and offers tips on the different ways of mixing different kinds of paint.

This is a subject that might seem of little consequence when you decide to take up the brush and make some marks. After all, it's natural to fixate on what we perceive the desired outcome of our efforts will be rather than on the difficulties of 'the journey' getting there.

However, any artist with a little experience soon learns that breaking open the paint is merely the first step in a long sequence of lessons, the first of which is also one of the most fundamental: how DO you mix your paint?

When planning this article I thought back to how I approached this question as a young lad with my first set of Cotman watercolours. No one had actually offered me any instruction on how to mix paints,

so I had to make it up as I went along. What I'd assumed would be a simple enough task was actually a bit trickier than I thought.

With that in mind, in this article I'll cover a bit of colour theory to kick things off. I've written about it in some detail, but I've boiled it down to the basics to keep it easy to get to grips with.

With regards mixing the paints themselves, I've broken up the sections by medium rather than technique.

My personal favourite, and the first paint I learned to work with, is watercolour. So, I'll be exploring the numerous approaches to mixing this paint in particular detail.

Painting should be fun, particularly if you're doing it as a pastime or hobby, so there won't be too much dry 'technical theory' here, colour theory being the

exception. The object of this article is to provide easily accessible advice and tips, clearly set out, and free from unnecessary jargon or dry explanatory passages.

I found getting to grips with the basics kept me busy enough in the beginning, and only much later did I expand my craft by studying the subject a little deeper.

Kevin Crossley is a fantasy artist who has a taste for the weird. He works in both traditional and digital media to produce his Lovecraftian work: www.kevcrossley.com.

> ❝ **A young lad with my first set of Cotman watercolours, no one actually offered me any instruction on how to mix paints** ❞

20 STEPS TO MASTER MIXING

Learn to combine colours and mix paints like the experts, by following this step-by-step guide.

TOPICS COVERED

MEDIA
- Watercolours
- Acrylics
- Coloured inks
- Gouache
- Oils

THEORY
- Primary and secondary colours
- Colour wheel
- Colour complements

1 *Practice is key*

Learning how paint behaves as you mix it together or move it around on a surface takes a lot of practice. Some mediums can be used in different ways too like acrylics, which can be applied thickly, like oils, or in translucent washes like watercolour. The only way to become proficient is to get stuck in, but a bit of knowledge up-front will certainly help.

2 *Principles of colour mixing*

There are six main colours every painter should be familiar with, the Primary colours; blue, red and yellow, and Secondary colours; purple, orange and green. Secondary colours are achieved by mixing two primary colours: purple comes from blue and red, orange from red and yellow, and yellow and blue become green. There's a lot more to it of course, but these are the basics you need to get started.

The basics of colour theory are fairly simple to get to grips with, but after you've familiarised yourself with primary and secondary colours, and the results of mixing with them, there are also tertiary colours to think about, as well as a bewildering range of colour concepts and theories that expand the subject into something that can easily take a lifetime to master. Although there isn't room to go to such detail here, we can squeeze in a little extra theory, in particular about using white and black, which means talking about tints and shades. Mixing white into a colour will result in a paler hue, and this is called a tint. (Pink is a tint of red, for example.) Mixing black into a colour produces a darker hue, or shade. (Maroon is a shade of red.)

3 *The colour wheel*

To get more out of mixing paint, it helps to expand your knowledge about the relationships between colours, and the best way to see this is with a colour wheel. This chart or 'key' perfectly illustrates which colours complement one another (those that are next to one another) and which ones don't (those that are opposites on the wheel).

4 *Colour complements*

This knowledge can be put to immediate use. To create harmonious moods or atmospheres in an image, colours that complement one another are perfect. Red is perfectly matched with orange and yellow for example, and yellow sits well with green shades too. Blue works well with purple hues, but a little practice will reveal all sorts of complementary matches.

5 *Opposites that attract*

Colours that sit opposite one another on the colour wheel create a very different 'vibe'. Greens with reds seem to fight against one another, and the same is true for blue and orange, yellow and purple. However, things aren't quite that simple. These opposites are also referred to as 'complements'; although these combinations can reject one another, certain hues can work strikingly together.

6 *Mixing watercolours*

When painting with watercolours, you're actually painting with a large volume of tinted water called a wash. When applied to paper its liquidity makes the medium very mobile, allowing it to flow and cover large areas quickly. This fluidity is responsible for the reputation watercolours have for being difficult to control, but with a change in perspective this becomes one of their unique attributes.

7 *How much water?*

For watercolours you'll need a lot of water. A jam jar is fine, but will get dirty very quickly, so the larger the container, the better. The mixing palette should also be large with plenty of room (or reservoirs) to hold your washes. A ceramic saucer can be used as well.

8 *First mixes*

If you use tubes, squeeze a small amount of colour onto your palette. When using 'pans' of solid pigment, wet these with a little water first. Add clean water to your palette reservoir then dip your brush into it to wet the bristles. Next, dab the brush onto the paint you need, and mix it gently into the water. Repeat this process until you've created the desired colour wash.

Whatever sort of paint you use, there is a selection of basic equipment you'll need. I would recommend keeping it simple to begin with. A small selection of good quality brushes, from small to large and flat, are essential for washes. I find a small bottle with a pump-actioned spray nozzle filled with water is very useful for keeping paint wet, or moistening paper. Choosing the right sort of paper is essential too, and there are many kinds available. The final item you'll need is a palette to mix your colours on. These come in many shapes, sizes and materials, including plastic, ceramic and wood.

9 Multiple reservoirs

A colour wash can be made darker with more paint, and variations are created by adding dabs of different colours. I find it useful to use a palette with multiple reservoirs, in which I can mix a number of different washes of varying intensities and hues. This saves time when painting, and ensures your work flow is uninterrupted by having to stop and create new washes too often.

10 Mixing on paper

The beauty of watercolour is its translucency, an attribute which allows washes to be applied on top of previous, dry washes of colour to gradually create subtle ranges and variations of tone, hue and mood. Washes can also be mixed into one another while still wet on the paper, or raw pigment can be added to wet paper or washes to create even more mixing options.

11 Wet washes

A popular technique involves paint being added to, or taken away from, washes still wet on the paper. While it can be difficult to predict what will happen, let alone plan a particular outcome, it's a great exercise to build confidence using watercolours. Begin by painting a colour wash onto paper. Adding strokes of darker or different colours while the wash is still wet creates all sorts of wonderful effects.

12 Watercolour pencils

I don't want to get into too much detail about water soluble pencils, but it's worth trying them out alongside your watercolour paints. They can be applied to dry paper, with water added afterwards, or they can be used as part of the painting process, into wet washes or damp areas. Used dry over a dry painting they can add detail and form. It really is worth experimenting with them.

13 A note about washes

It's logical that many of the other liquid mediums can be used in a similar way to watercolours – so much of what has been described can be applied to coloured inks, liquid acrylics and acrylic washes. However, each sort of paint requires particular techniques and methods unique to that medium so although there may be some overlap, there are principal differences you must familiarise yourself with.

14 Mixing coloured inks & liquid acrylics

I received a set of Windsor & Newton coloured inks at the same time as I got my first watercolours, and although I found many similarities between them as liquid mediums, I quickly discovered that inks were much less versatile. Once dry, they become watertight unlike watercolour, and the same is true for liquid acrylic mediums.

15 *Diluting on the palette*

However, the fluid properties of inks and liquid acrylics mean they can be diluted to any degree on the mixing palette, just like watercolours. You can also add acrylic retarders to the colour mixes, which helps prevent the paint drying too quickly. Be careful to clean your palette well after use though, as dried ink will crack and flake on the palette, causing unwanted problems with further washes.

16 *Mixing gouache*

Gouache is similar to watercolour, but is opaque. It can be diluted with water, just like watercolour, but you must be careful not to add too much paint to the paper otherwise it might crack and crumble away. Gouache tends to change value as it dries (lighter colours dry darker, and darker hues dry lighter), but the pigment quality is fantastic, so it's well worth playing with them.

17 *Mixing acrylics*

Since its popular debut in the 1950s, acrylic paint has become a popular medium which sits somewhere between watercolour and oil, as it shares certain properties with each. There are two main options when mixing acrylics; you can create liquid translucent washes (but be prepared for the fact they are watertight once dry) or you can mix them straight from the tube, like oils.

18 *The importance of misting*

If it's mixed straight from the tube, acrylic paint creates bold, colour rich hues which dry very quickly, unlike oils. This means a painting can be created quite quickly, but it also means the paint will dry on the palette if left unattended for even a brief period. Acrylic retardant helps, but I also spray a mist of water over the paint frequently to keep it wet.

19 *Mixing oils*

Oil paint has been the dominant medium for painted art since the 15th century, and was used as a decorative medium for centuries before that. Its popularity persists due to its versatility, durability and slow drying time; allowing it to be worked and re-worked for extended periods of time before it dries. It can be mixed with a brush, palette knife, bits of wood or anything that comes to hand.

20 *Thinners and texture mediums*

Oil can be thinned (and brushes cleaned) using various oil solutions, solvents, spirits and turpentine, but always use in a well ventilated room. Extra texture can be added to thick paints like oil and acrylic by adding 'texture mediums'. These materials give the paint all sorts of rough/granular properties, which add extra character to a finished painting.

USING A LIMITED COLOUR PALETTE

A FEW HUES CAN BE ALL YOU NEED

Learning how to use colour well is a skill that can take years upon years to master, and there are some who never manage it. Even if you have extensive knowledge of colour theory, putting it into practice can still prove difficult. This is when working in a 'limited palette' really helps. The trick is to select a main colour, such as yellow ochre, then use only a couple of other colours to create mix variations (eg burnt sienna and pale olive). Add black and white to create lighter tints and darker shades. It might sound restrictive, but once you try it, you will discover just these few hues have so many possible uses.

MIXING OFF THE PALETTE

ON PAPER, ON THE CANVAS...

As we've seen, mixing colour is not limited to the palette, but can be mixed on the paper or canvas as you paint. In fact, the whole process of painting could be looked at as an extended, complex exercise in mixing colours. There are numerous tools, apart from brushes that can be brought to bear to give your painting even more texture or atmospheric variation. The cheapest option is probably the humble toothbrush. The diffuser is another affordable tool. One part of the tool is dipped in liquid paint, and you blow through the other end to force paint up and out in a fine spray. The more expensive option is of course the airbrush. There are numerous brands and kinds, but all offer more control and a much finer spray.

Core skills

TIPS FOR MIXING COLOURS

Freelance painter and art director ADAM PAQUETTE explores the basic principles behind colour mixing and how you can put them into practice in your own painting projects.

Most modern artists have, at some point, confronted the choice between working traditionally and digitally. For me, the physicality, atmosphere and tension of canvas produces the ideal situation for exploring ideas and personal subjects. Traditional painting is also peerless as a means to study colour, light and form from the still life or human model.

However, much of my work consists of production art and illustrations with fast turnaround, so speed and flexibility is important. Digital painting programs are revolutionary in that regard. In either case, there are always ways to improve our workflow. Here I'll focus specifically on accurate and decisive colour mixing.

Adam is a painter, storyteller, illustrator and adventurer: www.site.paquette.com.au.
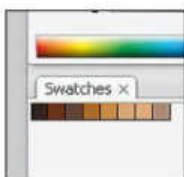
1 Setting up your workspace

Good colour mixing relies on an efficient, organised workspace. Ensure that your canvas and mixing area are illuminated by the same light, preferably an ambient source such as indirect sunlight from a window.

Ensure plenty of room for your mixing palette, with brushes, mediums, solvents, rags and palette knives nearby.

Wood, plastic, wax and freezer paper are all good options for a mixing surface, but I find glass palettes are the easiest to clean and work on.

I use a simple, edgeless glass photo frame that I bought from a two-dollar shop. Finally, have space to take several steps back from your canvas to assess your painting.

PURE PIGMENTS

CREATE GRADIENTS OF COLOUR TO BRING OUT THE HUES, TONES AND CHROMA OF YOUR PIGMENTS

The key to painting in general is to retain the purity of your colour mixtures, and to establish a strong hierarchy of hue, tone and chroma. For a limited-palette painting, I arrange my pure pigments across the top of my palette (A), and then create vertical gradients by progressively mixing white (or an equivalent) into each colour.

By keeping each horizontal row equal in value, you can mix across different colours and temperatures while retaining a consistent tone (B). A more common way to mix pigments is to arrange the colours around the edges of your palette, separating them into groups of warm and cool, with the middle of the palette open for mixing (C).

Regardless of how you arrange your colours, it's a good idea to use the same layout every time in order to memorise their location and mix them instinctively.

Try to prepare a good quantity of the colours you need prior to painting to avoid unnecessary additional mixing.
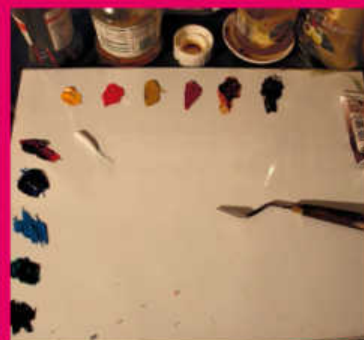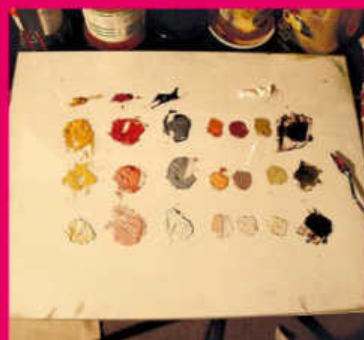
If you always use the same layout when arranging your colours on the palette, mixing them will soon become instinctive.

2 How to choose your colours

Once you're comfortably set up, and assuming you've completed any preparatory sketches, the next step is to make firm decisions on which colours you'll use. The range of choices is often overwhelming.

The best solution is to approach your painting with a limited palette. Oil painting masters such as John Singer Sargent and Anders Zorn were renowned for using as few as three or four pigments to create bold, compelling compositions. Using too many pure colours without good planning invariably results in chaotic and garish artwork.

At most, I would recommend starting with eight colours; a warm and cool variant of red, yellow and blue, in addition to white and black, will enable you to paint virtually any subject you desire.

Note that white and black paints not only reduce intensity, but also cool your colours, and grey can even act as an alternative to blue. In a digital workspace, use your swatch window to arrange a limited palette, just as you would with oils, or lay pools around the edge of the canvas to colourpick from.

Start off with a maximum of eight colours in your swatch: black and white, plus variants of red, yellow and blue.
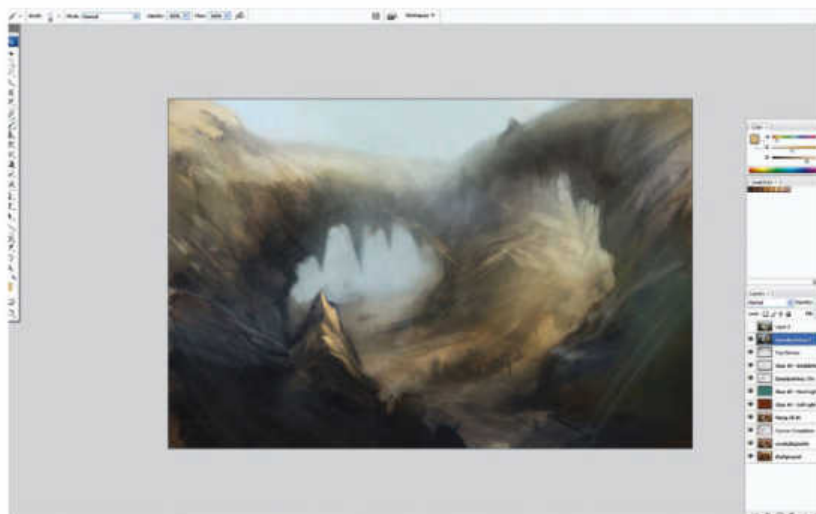
3 Mixing on the canvas

Before you rush in, there are a few important things to remember when getting to grips with paint handling.

First, you may have noticed that mixing two pure pigments will result in a 'net loss' of intensity. This is due to the way colour and light work together; in the case of traditional painting we call this 'subtractive colour mixing'.

When light from a source such as the sun or a light bulb hits oil paint, or any other physical object, some parts of the visible spectrum are reflected while the remaining frequencies are absorbed.
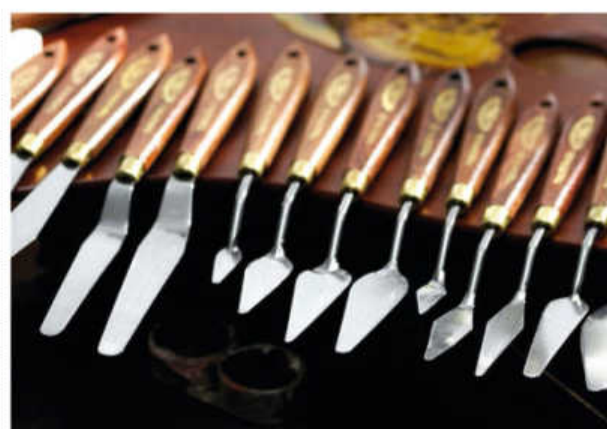
What we observe as red paint is in fact light with all colours except red subtracted by the pigment. Mixing two colours combines their subtractive effect, reducing the intensity of the colour reflected back to our eye. This is why loading your canvas with too many pigments, or forgetting to clean your brush, can result in dull and muddy paintings.

(A) Optical mixing and (B) glazing techniques can add energy to your composition.

4 Three colour mixing techniques

We can divide colour mixing into three techniques: pre-mixing, glazing and optical mixing.
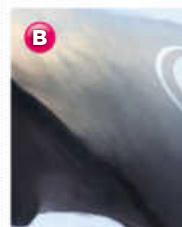
Pre-mixing trains your eye to identify colours and mix them from their constituent pigments. Using a palette knife enables you to keep your colour pools pure by wiping after each mix.

Glazing is a process of laying transparent colour across your painting, tinting the hue or tone. In traditional work, this affects the way light travels in and out of the pigment, creating vibrant colour.

Optical mixing involves placing small, adjacent strokes of different colours, which, at a distance, our eyes read as one colour.

5 True colour vs monitors

Unlike paints that subtract and absorb parts of the spectrum, a monitor produces colour by combining different amounts of red, green and blue light emissions. We call this 'additive colour mixing'. This enables it to generate stronger luminescence and a broader range of colours than is possible with traditional paints. While the power of a monitor still pales against that of the outdoor sun, it makes it possible to imitate such things as neon lighting or explosions. Be aware that if you print a digital painting that has been created in RGB mode, colours will appear darker and less intense on the surface of the paper. To remedy this, convert your image to CMYK mode and make the necessary adjustments before you print.

6 Try new approaches

Where possible, you should attempt to delve as deeply as you can into both traditional and digital forms of art. Each is rich with unique personality and opportunity. Great artists are unafraid to experiment and break new ground, often experiencing profound breakthroughs at the intersection of technique and technology. The only way to learn the limits of your materials is to use them as frequently as possible, and embrace them as a means to communicate your unique vision of the world. Colour and light are infinite topics that we have only just begun to explore.

Core skills

HOW TO PAINT WITH WATERCOLOURS

Watercolour painting can be tricky to master, but can produce wonderful results.
BRYNN METHENEY walks you through the basics, with some expert tips.

Watercolour is a versatile and flexible medium that can yield a variety of results. Also known as aquarelle, it's a painting method in which the paints are made of pigments suspended in a water-soluble vehicle.

Dating back thousands of years, watercolour is a tricky medium to master, but it's certainly one worth pursuing. When you create a painting in watercolours, light reflects off the white of the paper and bounces up through the colours, giving it a luminosity that can be truly magical.

Professional children's book illustrator Alina Chau has a whimsical style that's highly sought after for various art exhibitions worldwide: you can see some of

her amazing work at www.alinachau.com. Chau's lyrical watercolours have garnered her a devoted fan base and the accolades of her peers. "To achieve a desirable result with watercolour it's important to have the right tools," she recommends. "While you don't have to invest in an expensive set of supplies, you don't want to use paint or paper that turns out not to be suitable for watercolours."

Here's her advice for people starting out: "A common misunderstanding is that you have to use the same palette that you used for the colour study when creating your final painting.

"While it's true that you'll recreate the look of the colour sketch, you should always start a new painting with a clean set of tools and a clean palette.

"This will stop the colour on your painting getting too muddy and hard to control. Also, wash your tools regularly whenever they start to get dirty. This will keep the purity and accuracy of the colour."

One final tip: "While you don't need to worry about paper getting buckled in a sketchbook, you do need to watch for this in your final painting. To prepare the paper you can either stretch your paper or get a watercolour block, which is pre-stretched."

But first things first: across these pages, we'll walk you through some of the basic techniques of painting with watercolours.

> **❝ Light reflects off the white of the paper and bounces up through the colours, giving it a luminosity ❞**

THE BASICS

Watercolour painting is all about layering and texture. We explain how to get it right.

MATERIALS

PAINTS
■ Holbien Artists Watercolour
Winsor & Newton Watercolour

SURFACE
■ Arches Hot Press Watercolour Paper, 140 lb

BRUSHES
■ Watercolour Brushes sizes: 6, 3, 0.8, 000

OTHER
■ Kneaded Eraser 2H Caran D'Ache Pencil, Paper Towels, Masking Tape, Salt, Sponge

1 *Buy a range of brushes*
It's important to have a range of brushes. This will depend on how large or small you work. I tend to work on the smaller side so my brushes range from 000 to 6. Experiment with different sizes to work out what your favourites are. But I'd also recommend getting hold of brushes that are smaller than what you think you'll use. These will come in handy for those small details you don't anticipate.

2 *Get some good quality paints*
It's important to invest in good quality watercolour. It will last longer and won't yellow or degrade as much over time. There are lots of different brands and levels available in stores and online. I use a variety, from Holbien and Winsor & Newton. Buy a few colours from different brands and find out which you prefer. Start small: you can mix a variety of colours using a limited pallete.

3 It's all about dry vs wet

There are two major factors when painting with watercolours: wet and dry. As the name suggests, watercolour is a water-based medium. We can manipulate the darkness and saturation of the pigment depending on how much water we add. There are many ways to paint in watercolour and as you try them, you'll find the ones that work best for you. I've found working dry to wet helps me achieve more control.
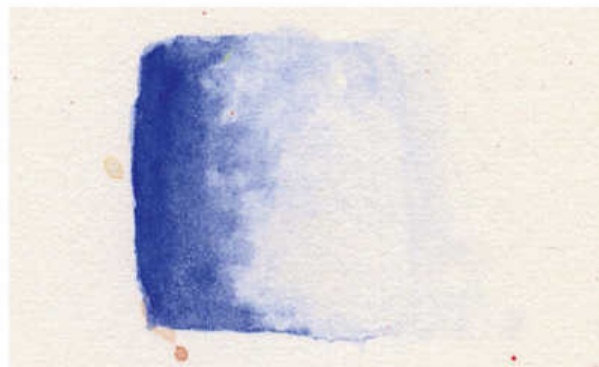
4 Work from light to dark

Another important rule to remember when working with watercolours is that we're working from light to dark. This means that anything we're keeping white or light in our painting needs to stay that way for the whole duration of the work. We'll build our values up; layer-by-layer to arrive at the effect we want. This does take a lot of planning but the results will be worth it.

5 You'll need paper towels

One very important tool to have in your tool kit when working with watercolours is a paper towel. The paper towel almost acts as a kneaded eraser for your watercolours. Laying down a wash of colour and then lifting parts of it up is a great way to add layers of detail gradually. Paper towels are also very useful for correcting mistakes or directing the paint in different direction.

6 The splatter technique

One handy trick to add some action to your watercolour painting, such as water spray or floating dust, is to use a splatter technique. Hold your paintbrush between your thumb and middle fingers. Using your index finger, pull back on the bristles and let them snap forward. This method is a bit random, but can yield some very fun results, so I'd urge you to give it a try.

7 How to use blooming

A good way to bleed colours into one another is through "blooming". Take a good amount of water to pigment in your brush and apply it to the paper. When the stroke is still wet, add in another colour with the same amount of water. You can manipulate the colours to where they need to be at this point. Allow this to dry and you'll notice that there are subtle gradients throughout the stroke.

8 Getting textures right

You'll notice that working in watercolours on a rougher paper does have its advantages. One of the obvious ones is that you don't have to work to hard to achieve a nice texture. This said, it's important to try to depict objects and materials with their textures included. This means using lights and darks as well as wets and drys.

Painting

9 *Pulling in colour*

When you apply a dry, more saturated stroke, you can pull from that stroke with just water. This is a great way to show form and indicate a light source or edge. Apply a stroke using very little water and more pigment. Before the stroke is dry, take a moderately wet brush and pull the colour out from the darker stroke. You can pull the colour quite far depending on how dry that initial stroke is.

10 *Layering colour*

Because watercolour is a thin medium, you'll need to build up colour gradually. This is another advantage to the medium as you can do some color mixing right on the paper. Take one colour and lay it down. Allow it to dry and then revisit with another shade. You'll notice where they overlap, the pigment mixes and you're left with a different colour. This is great for building up flesh tones.

11 *The scumbling techniqe*

Scumbling is a technique used by many oil painters to create soft hues of layered pigment and light. You're essentially layering the colour in soft, indirect layers to create the hue and look you want. Simply lay in semi-wet strokes of paint in watercolour. As I apply more color, I'm careful to keep adding water so the colours blend and stay soft. It can be easy to overwork and produce a muddy look, so less is more.
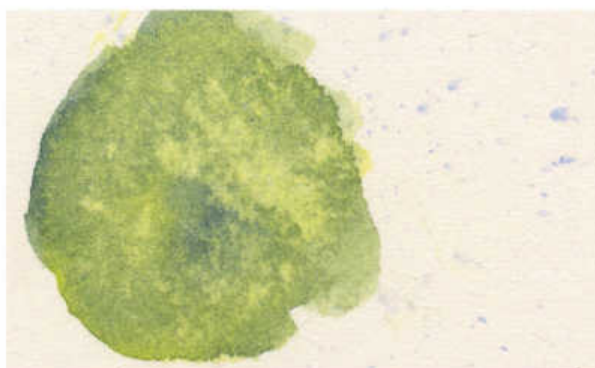
12 *Lifting colour*

Sometimes you'll need to "erase" your watercolour. While you can't return the paper to 100% white, you can lift away colour to correct a mistake or adjust the lighting in a piece. Work with an already dry swatch of watercolour and using clear water, paint in the shape you'd like to lift out. Let it set for a just a minute then dab away the water with a paper towel. You'll see the colour lift out in the shape you painted in.

13 *Using salt*

Watercolour is all about layering and texture. Salt can provide an interesting texture with little effort as the salt crystals absorb the water, leaving a unique pattern in the pigment. Lay down a swatch of watercolour and while the paint is still wet, sprinkle over salt. Let this sit until mostly dry and simply wipe or blow away the salt. This technique is useful for adding texture to natural surfaces like rocks or tree bark.

14 *Sponging*

Another household item you can use to apply watercolours is a sponge. Simply mix your pigment in a small dish or tray, dip the sponge into the paint and blot onto your paper. You can alter the wetness of your paint and achieve different effects. A drier look would be suited for plant life or scaly skin while a wet application might be more suited for waterscapes or clouds.

15 Negative painting

Watercolour is about planning. Think about where you'd like your whites and lights before you apply paint. It's vital to keep control of your brush as you paint in the edge of where you'd like your negative space to begin. Load it with semi-wet pigment and paint along the edge of where you'd like your negative space to begin. Then pull the color away from the edge of the stroke to fill in where you'd like pigment.

17 Find a light source

I've used a pencil with 2H lead to keep my drawing able to withstand the water from painting. First, I lay in some light paint strokes with a medium sized brush. My paint is very watery so won't stain the paper right away. Using a paper towel, I blot away most of it. Now I have an idea of where my light source might be, I add in more opaque strokes; this will be the basis for the form of the dinosaur, shadows and darks.

19 Keep layering

Using my paper towel, I begin to lay in colour and take it away to get a more layered look to my piece. I am careful to let areas dry before I apply more colour. This allows me to move around the whole study. I'm also paying more attention to what colour goes where. Again, I'm using techniques I described earlier – Light to Dark, Wet and Dry, as well as Colour Pulling – to achieve the look I'm wanting.

16 Using tape

You can use tape to mask of areas you'd like to keep clean and white. This technique is useful for hard edges involving machinery or architecture. Just lay down the tape where you'd like the paper to stay white. Use a tape that won't rip your paper, such as drafting tape or painters' tape. Paint over and around the tape. Once your paint is dry, remove the tape slowly and you should have a straight clean line.

18 Pull colour and layer tones

Now you can use what we learned earlier about pulling colour from a dark stroke using just water. Using a wetter paintbrush, I am able to push and pull the pigment around out of the strokes I've just laid down. This technique helps me further to find my light source and it also makes it easier to layer in more tones and colour.

20 Add finer detail

I'm nearly finished with my dinosaur – I'm now at the stage where I can begin to lay in markings, final dark brush strokes and skin texture. It's important to resist the temptation to use your darkest darks until you reach this step. Because watercolour painting is a transparent medium, you'll need to make sure you keep your lights light, and save the darks and details until the end. ●

SIX EXPERT TIPS

HERE ARE SOME MORE WAYS TO GET MORE OUT OF WATERCOLOURS.

•Mixing bleach into your paint will produce a blotchy effect, as it fights with the pigment.

•Use a toothbrush to create a spray/splatter effect. Try varying the distance from the paper for different effects.

•Adding water to dry watercolours lifts and redistributes pigment, creating contours.

•Apply tape and liquid masking products to retain lightness. Remove when paint's dry.

•Try scraping painted areas away to introduce gritty marks and lines.

•Use the brush's butt end to spread thick lines of wet paint in an unusual way.

Core skills

HOW TO PAINT WITH ACRYLICS

Versatile, vibrant and affordable, acrylics can be painted on almost anything.
BRYNN METHENEY explains how to get started with acrylic paints.

Acrylics are fast drying paints that can be used straight from a tube, like oil paints, or can be thinned with water, like watercolour. They are extremely versatile and vibrant, offering the artist a wide range of textures, colours and consistencies.

AFFORDABLE OPTION

Acrylics are also affordable, making them ideal for covering large areas with paint. Because these paints are opaque and fast drying, they can be very forgiving, allowing you to cover up mistakes with more paint.

They can be painted on almost anything and dry into a water resistant surface. While you need to be aware of how quickly they dry, acrylics can be blended beautifully.

The heavy body colour of acrylics is buttery and smooth, blending on the canvas almost like oils.

Because they basically dry into a plastic surface, they are ideal for using in multimedia painting as well.

I will begin by introducing you to four brush shapes that will be useful in your journey into acrylic painting and what each shape can be used for.

I will also cover how to care for your brushes – which is an especially important factor in acrylic painting.

CHOICE OF PAINTS

I'll introduce the paints I am using too. Every artist has their favourite brand and I encourage you to look into what you enjoy working with. The tips in this article can be put into practice with any heavy body acrylic paint, student or professional grade.

Simple techniques such as mixing and misting are also introduced to help you get started with this wonderfully versatile and rewarding medium.

Once you're up to speed, turn the page to discover more advanced techniques using acrylic paints...

Brynn specialises in creature design, fantasy illustration and visual development for film, games and publishing. She lives and works in Oakland, California. See her work at www.brynnart.com.

❝ Opaque and fast drying, these paints can be very forgiving, letting you cover up mistakes ❞

LEARN THE BASICS
Get started with acrylics, from choosing your brushes to fundamental techniques.

1 *Brushes*
Acrylic brushes tend to be made from synthetic materials and can be used with a variety of mediums. Oil brushes and watercolour brushes should not be used. It's important to have a good variety of brushes, from small to large. You'll soon learn which you're more comfortable with, but these four are some of the more common shapes you'll encounter. The Filbert brush is a great all-purpose brush that can offer a straight or rounded shape.

2 *Paints*
For this lesson, I'm using golden acrylics, which I like because of their buttery texture and ability to hold up to a lot of water. These are considered 'Heavy Body Acrylics'. I'd encourage you to experiment with a variety of brands to see which one you enjoy working with the most. Acrylic paint is essentially plastic; more specifically, pigment suspended in a polymer emulsion. You can break that emulsion with too much water, so take care when thinning it out.

3 Mixing

Mixing paints is a precise process. It's good to know your colour wheel here as you'll be mixing very specific colours as you work. Red and yellow can be combined to make a variety of oranges. Add in some green and you'll get brown and burnt umbers. Using a palette knife, a plastic knife, or even an extra brush is ideal. Mix thoroughly and remember that some paints can dry a slight shade darker.

4 Misting

Acrylics dry quickly – sometimes too quickly. One way to keep paints moist easily is to mist them with water as you work. You can buy gardening misters at hardware or gardening stores. Depending on the surface you're painting on, you can water your acrylics down enough to almost resemble watercolour. This can be a valuable trick to quickly lie in an under painting to get started.

5 Gesso

Gesso is a white paint mixture used as a ground for painting with both acrylics and oils. Linen is stretched for canvas then painted with gesso to provide a smoother and more resistant surface for the paint to pushed around on. Acrylic gesso is a little different from traditional gesso as it contains latex. You can also use gesso to create texture under the paint you're going to apply.

6 Glazing

Glazing is a great way to seal pencil sketches to paint over. Using a gel medium is the best and most even way to achieve a glaze. I start by selecting the colour I'd like to glaze with, in this case green. I mix a bit of gel medium and paint together with just a little mist of water to loosen it all up. Once it's an even mixture, I apply the glaze over these black strokes.

7 Blending

Blending is a tricky technique to master. First I lay in a layer of white then using a filbert brush, add in blue along the bottom of the area being blended. I stroke back and forth, rapidly up and down the area, until I get a nice gradient from darker blue to white. Working wet into wet is the best way to blend. You can also dry blend by laying in colour, letting it dry then dry brushing colour over it.

8 Wet in wet and over dry to build texture

It's best to use this technique when the colour or surface underneath is dry. I start by loading up my brush with a deep purple and paint a shape into the dry orange paint. From here I can drag out the other side of the stroke to feather it into the canvas and orange paint below. You can see that acrylics have an incredible amount of control and will stay put pretty much where ever you put them.

OTHER MEDIUMS

TWO SUBSTANCES THAT DO VERY DIFFERENT THINGS

Acrylics offer a variety of mediums to manipulate the paint and surface you're working on. Two mediums I happen to have on hand are Golden C.T. Interference Green-Blue Medium and Golden Polymer Varnish. Both of these substances do very different things. The Varnish can be used as a protective sealant and colour enhancer. This particular varnish is high gloss, meaning it will remain shiny. The Interference Medium is essentially an iridescent medium, giving the surface below a glittery blue/green hue. This could be used for scales or even some sort of cosmic effect in a landscape. I encourage you to explore mediums online on manufacturers' websites. They offer plenty of information on how to use them.

GESSO CANVAS

A QUICK AND CHEAP CANVAS

You can gesso newsprint for a quick and cheap canvas if you're in a pinch. Just layout newsprint and cover with acrylic gesso using a wide, large brush. Allow it to dry for about an hour or so depending on the size. Now use it to practise and paint studies.

Core skills

GOING FURTHER WITH ACRYLICS

Once you've become confident with acryclic paints, it's time to start experimenting. Illustrator TERESE NIELSEN introduces some more advanced techniques.

Acrylics can be applied thick, right out of a tube, or water them way down and spray them through an airbrush. I work in mixed media and begin most of my paintings by laying down a watercolour-like wash for my underpaintings. It dries quickly and won't wash or lift off, like watercolour or gouache. You can then bring into play other mediums on top of the wash. I frequently use oil and coloured pencils.

Acrylics can be used on many surfaces, including paper, fabric, wood, collage, papier mâché, silk screening, plaster and masonry. But the main upside is also a downside: acrylics dry so fast!

The key is to keep your paint wet in the palette, and don't let it dry in your brushes. To reduce the speed of the drying paint on your media of choice, try adding a few drops of an acrylic "retarder" or gel to increase the working time – either can work well.

Some brands of acrylic have a heavier saturation of pigment, creating strong brilliant colour. Some of the brands I use are Nova Colour, Liquitex and Golden.

Paint can be squeezed out on anything, but if you plan on working for several hours/days on a piece, save time and money by setting up a palette you can cover to keep the paint wet.

Sta-Wet plastic palettes seal with an airtight lid and have a wet sponge in the bottom with an acrylic film above that. I prefer porcelain butcher trays, which I cover with a larger piece of glass for the lid. Line the sides with folded paper towels and spritz with a spray bottle.

Acrylics can be applied with anything from fingers to an airbrush. I recommend natural and synthetic brushes. For small paintings I use a range of brushes: rounds (#1-3, 8, 12), flats (1/2 inch, 1 inch), and filberts (#2, 8). Rounds are good for controlled washes, small details and thin to thick lines. Use flats for large wide areas, bold strokes and clean straight edges. Filberts are a combination of the two and work for blending, as well as creating soft, rounded edges.

❝ **Acrylics dry so fast! The key is to keep your paint wet in the palette, and don't let it dry in your brushes**

MATERIALS

PAINTS
■ Gamblin oil paints
Alizarin Crimson, Indian,Yellow, Titanium White, Sap Green Hue, Phthalo, Turquoise, Burnt Umber, Raw Umber, Burnt Sienna, Payne's Grey, Napthol Scarlett

SURFACE
■ Ampersand Gessobord Gessoed hardboard

BRUSHES
■ Isabey Isacryl Round #0/2, #0, #1, #2, #4, Flat #2, Bright #2, #4, Filbert #10

MEDIUMS
■ Walnut Alkyd Oil

NEW TECHNIQUES TO TRY

Discover how to get more out of acrylics using knives, leaves, sand and more

1 *Experimentation is key*
The methods of working with acrylic are numerous. Apply it thick from the tube or watered down into washes and glazes. Try adding texture by mixing sand, plaster or sawdust into the acrylic, and paint with that. In addition, experiment with pressing various objects and textures into the paint and then imprinting that onto your surface. Paint with a knife, or flick and spatter the paint. Practise achieving a smooth blend between two colours.
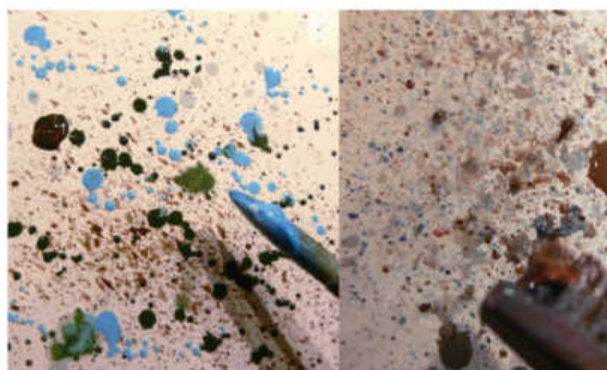

2 *Graded wash*
First, load your brush with paint and begin your strokes, then load your brush with clean water and stroke to achieve a layered, smooth gradient. Don't try and correct any mistakes at this point, and use your whole arm movement to get good long strokes. It's better to load more paint than less at the start into the paint and then imprint that onto your surface. Paint with a knife, or flick and spatter the paint.
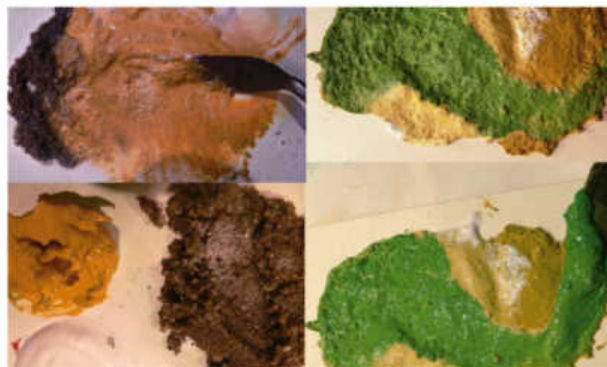
3 Gradations with a retarder

Because acrylic paint dries so quickly, it's harder to achieve those subtle variations in tone that you would in oils. Adding a retarder, such as Golden Acrylic Glazing Liquid, helps to lengthen the paint's drying time. Blending with a bristle brush can produce a textured but smooth feel, while blending with a moist brush in long strokes will result in a smooth transition.

4 Imprinting

Acrylic is versatile and can be used with everyday objects to create unique textures to paint into and over. For example, leaves can be painted over for texture, while heavier items can be painted on and pushed against the paper to create unique patterns in the paint over multiple washes. So let your imagination run wild. One person's rubbish is another's treasure.

5 Splatter on dry and wet

Hold the bristle up and away from the painting and rub your fingers from the tip to the base for a fine spray. Experiment with using different brushes and bristle thickness for different results. Using the same technique on wet paper will diffuse the paint. You could also have a go at blotting the spray or using masking tape to create hard and soft edges.

6 Impasto Gel and a palette knife

Apply thick layers of paint from a tube and use the palette knife to sculpt the paint. Using the flat of the knife, scraping with edges and smoothly juggling it can be a great way to create unique textures. You can use an Impasto Gel to add volume to the acrylic, which will also give an oil paint feel to your artwork.

7 Texture with sand

Using sand is a great way to add texture to acrylic paint, which can dry very smoothly. You'll need to use clean silica sand for this but when you're mixing it in, make sure you go slowly to avoid bubbles forming in the mixture. When applied to your acrylic with a palette knife, this is an easy way to build up texture.

8 Wet in wet and over dry to build texture

Painting over and around wet paint can yield great results for building texture. However, using acrylics in this way means you'll need to work fast before it dries. Conversely, you can drag a dry brush across dried paint to catch flecks of colour on the high spots, building colour and texture incrementally as you go. ●

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3 GRADES OF ACRYLIC PAINT

COMMERCIAL ACYRLICS COME IN THREE GRADES: HERE'S WHAT THEY ARE.

Artist or professional acrylics are created and designed to resist chemical reactions from exposure to water, ultraviolet light, and oxygen.

Student acrylics have working characteristics similar to pro artist acrylics, but with lower pigment concentrations, cheaper formulas, and a smaller range of colours. Pricier pigments are generally replicated by hues. Colours are designed to be mixed, although the colour strength is usually lower.

Scholastic acrylics use less expensive pigments as well as dyes in formulations that are safe for younger artists, and economical for classroom use. The colour range is limited to common primary and secondary colours, and actual pigments are unspecified.

VARIETIES OF ACRYLIC

3 OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF ACRYLIC PAINT

Craft acrylics can be used on surfaces besides canvas, such as wood, metal, fabrics, and ceramics. They are used in decorative painting techniques and faux finishes, often to decorate normal, everyday objects.

Heavy body acrylics are typically found in the Artist and Student Grade paints. They are the best choice for impasto or heavier paint applications.

Interactive acrylics are all-purpose acrylic artist colours which have the characteristic fast drying nature of Artists' acrylics, but are formulated to allow artists to delay drying when they need more working time.

Core skills

GET STARTED WITH OIL PAINTING

Painting with oils is fun and rewarding, but can also be quite challenging.
CHRIS LEGASPI explains what you'll need, how to get started and how to do it right.

Oil painting is a fun and very rewarding way to make art. For the serious artist, it's the next logical progression after drawing. For others, it's a fun, challenging hobby. Whichever type of artist you consider yourself to be, I'm going to share my experiences and ideas to help get you started in oil painting.

First, I'll explore materials. There are so many different materials to choose from, it can be very intimidating, so I've included my personal recommendations to help simplify the process.

After that, I'll go over three exercises that will help you to learn and become familiar with painting. There are three subjects to be explored: figures and portrait, still-life, and

landscape or outdoor painting. Each subject matter presents a unique challenge and a unique learning opportunity for the beginner oil painter.

The first and simplest exercise is the still-life. I'll go through the process of setting up a simple still-life and the materials needed. Then I'll share the painting process that you can follow along with.

The most important part of learning how to paint with oils is the start, so the simpler your first paintings are, the easier it will be to get started and keep painting.

The next subject is the portrait. I'll go through the process of doing a self portrait using only one tube of paint: burnt umber.

This exercise is great for beginner oil painters because it's very simple to do, requires few materials and is a great

introduction into working with oils. The final subject will be landscape painting. I'll share some of the process of painting outdoors and materials I use.

Whatever subject matter you enjoy the most, the goal of this article is to help make the painting experience fun and simple. So read on, and enjoy!

Chris is obsessed with figure drawing and painting. He also loves sharing great information on art and picture making. www.freshdesigner.com.

> **Oil painting is a fun, rewarding way to make art. For the serious artist, it's the next logical progression after drawing**

STARTING FROM SCRATCH
Discover how to choose the right materials, then try some exercises to get you going.

TOPICS COVERED

MATERIALS
- Brushes
- Colours
- Canvas
- Easel
- Palette
- Cleaning fluid

SUBJECTS
- Still-lifes
- Portraits
- Landscapes

1 Choose your brushes
Choosing brushes can be very intimidating because there so many varieties to choose (see page 60 for more on this). This is an example of the brushes I commonly use. I start most of the painting with bristle brushes, in round and flat shapes. Then I use smaller brushes to add details and soften edges.

2 Choose your colours
There are many, many oil paint colours and brands to choose from. For the beginning oil painter, I recommend starting with a tube of white, black and burnt umber. Doing tonal or black and white paintings is a great way to start. After I became familiar with the medium, I began to slowly add more colours.

3 Choose your canvas

There are many canvases and surfaces available. They can range from loose canvas, canvas pads, panels and stretched canvas. For oil painting beginners, I recommend working in small canvas panels or canvas pads. Since the start is the most important lesson, working small allows you to have more opportunities to start, finish and start another painting again.

4 Choose your easel

Easels mount and hold your canvas and/or palette while you are painting. There are many easels and styles available, but I'd recommend a French easel. A French easel is relatively low cost and very sturdy, and it can be used indoors or out. As a bonus, many French easels also come with a palette.

5 Where to mix your paints

A palette is any flat surface used by artists to mix paints. Almost any flat surface can be used as a palette. For oil painting, I recommend starting with either a wood palette or glass. I really enjoy working on glass because it is smooth and easy to clean. The wooden palette here is the first palette I used.

6 Get some cleaning fluid

To keep your brushes clean and functional and ready to use, some kind of solvent or paint thinner is needed. There are many solvents available, but I really enjoy using Gamsol. Gamsol is odorless and less toxic than most solvents. The metal can holds and carries my Gamsol in studio or outdoors.

CANVAS CHOICE

EXPLORING SOME COMMON OPTIONS

There are many types of canvases available. The most common are canvas panels and stretched canvas. After many years of painting, I gradually began to use canvas panels more because they are less expensive than stretched canvas and are also easier to store. Recently I've begun using canvas pads for oil sketches and studies. I really enjoy canvas pads because of their low price and ease of storage. Because beginning painters will need to start many paintings, I recommend canvas pads. The pads I use are Frederix, in 9"x12" size. This is a great size for painting indoors, or you can even cut the canvas to any smaller size you need for painting outdoors.

7 Miscellaneous supplies

Some of the miscellaneous supplies needed are paper towels for cleaning brushes and hands, brush holders, palette knives and scrapers, masking tape and brush cleaner. Many of these items will be used often during painting sessions and fortunately these are also very low cost and easily found items.

8 Indoor painting

These are the supplies I use for indoor painting. With these supplies I can begin practice painting and paint any subject I want. The canvas I usually use indoors is an 8"x10" or 9"x12" canvas panel. Because the easel is portable, I can use this set-up for landscape as well.

9 Paint a still-life

The first exercise to get started oil painting is to paint a simple still-life using only black and white. Tonal painting is great because it will allow you to focus only on values while becoming familiar with the medium. I begin the still-life painting by drawing the subject and then blocking-in the shadow shape.

10 Establish the half-tones

The next step is to establish the half-tones. I mix a medium dark grey and fill the half-tone shapes I see. At this stage, I ignore variations in tone and simplify the values into three main value shapes. This helps me focus less on the drawing and more on the painting process itself.

11 Lights and highlights

Next I establish the lights and highlights. I mix a light value grey and paint the light shapes I see first. Then, I mix an almost pure white tone and paint the highlights on top. I also use thicker paint strokes at this stage to help create a three-dimensional feeling to the painting.

12 Background tones

To complete the still-life I add tones in the background, softened and refined edges, and also add some thicker paint in the highlights. This is a more advanced technique but is a lot of fun to do once you become more familiar with using oils.
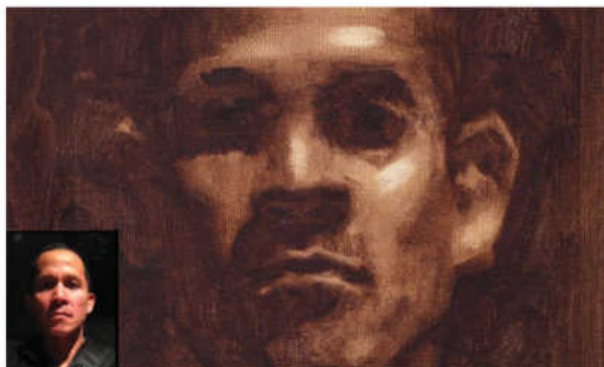
13 Rub-out technique

The next subject is the portrait. Above you can see an example of self portrait done using the burnt umber 'rub-out' technique. This means I use only burnt umber for the darks and midtones and then use solvent and paper towel to erase or rub out the lights and highlights. This exercise is simple and a lot of fun to do.

14 Tone the canvas

Step one is to tone the canvas with burnt umber. I apply a light wash of burnt umber using a brush. Then using a paper towel, I wipe the canvas to remove excess paint and create a smooth, brown mid-tone wash of tone and colour. This tone will serve as my mid-tone of the painting.

PALETTES

WOOD AND GLASS DO THE JOB

There are many types of palette available. I personally enjoy using wood and glass. Many art students and beginning painters use palette paper. These are fairly economical and convenient because they are also disposable. Since a glass surface is far superior for mixing and much more durable, I recommend trying a glass palette. One way to save on cost is to convert an old picture frame to a palette. Simply remove the picture and place the backing underneath the glass into the frame. This creates a smooth mixing surface that is also durable. This palette was made from an old 9"x12" picture frame, but any standard frame size will work well for a beginning painter.

15 Block in shadows

Next I draw the portrait and block in the shadows. Burnt umber is a very dark brown so I can make the shadows fairly dark here. I can also thin the paint with gamsol to create a wash of dark half-tone to help transition the shadows into the light and soften the edge.

16 Tweaking tones

To get my lights and highlights, I simply erase or rub out the paint. I use a dry towel to erase light tones. To get brighter tones, I use a paper towel dipped in gamsol. I can get very bright lights and highlights with the gamsol because it reveals the white of the canvas.

17 Restablish darks

Finally, I re-establish the darks using pure burnt umber. I use a small round brush to get the dark accents in the eyes, and also refine and correct the drawing as needed. To complete the painting, I soften edges and then go back to the paper towel to brighten lights and highlights.

18 Landscapes

The next subject to study is landscapes or outdoor painting. The materials I use are almost the same as indoor painting. Here I have my easel set up outdoors. The canvas I used is 6"x8" canvas panel taped to a wooden board for stability. With this set-up I can paint in almost any outdoor setting.

19 Paint a section

The first step is to define a section of the environment to paint. I try to keep the composition as simple as possible so that I can focus on the process and not the drawing. I start the painting by first drawing the big shapes and then work back to front to establish values I see.

20 Complete the painting

I complete the painting by painting the mid-ground tones and then finally foreground objects and shapes. The dark shapes in the foreground here really help to push the feeling of depth. To finish the painting, I'll a small brush to add fine details and also refine edges, then finally add texture and variety in the brushwork.

SET THE STAGE

HOW TO POSE YOUR STILL-LIFES

A simple way to begin painting is by painting simple still-lifes. To get the most out of my still-life practice, having a good stage or set-up for the objects is important. The first thing I recommend is to get a strong spot light. In this set-up I use a simple photography light with a 90W halogen bulb. Common clip lamps can be used as well. The surface is an ordinary cloth draped over an old stool. The colour and texture of the cloth can be changed as well for more variety. As long as the light is strong and the surface is not too reflective, this set-up can create beautiful light and shadow patterns that are a must for learning how to paint.

BURNT UMBER

THE BUDGET-FRIENDLY CHOICE

Burnt umber paintings are a great way to get started using oil paints. The first step is to set up a simple still-life (see above) using a strong spotlight to get nice shadows and contrast. The actual painting is done by using burnt umber to build up the darks and half-tones and using gamsol and a paper towel like an eraser to 'rub-out' or erase the lights and highlights. For brushes, I would choose rounds.

Core skills

HOW TO PAINT WITH GOUACHE

Gouache combines the flexibility of watercolour with the flow of acrylics.
BRYNN METHENEY explains all you need to know about this underrated medium.

Gouache might be my favourite medium. It combines the flexibility and workability of watercolour with the opaque and flow of acrylics. I find it to be the most versatile medium to paint with.

VERSATILE

Gouache can be manipulated using just water and so it is ideal for working in the field or in an office, from quick concepts and studies to final full paintings.

This medium has been used in the film and animation industries for decades for layouts, concepts and backgrounds.

You can layer it light to dark or dark to light and unlike watercolour, you can paint in whites instead of masking them off.

It can be very affordable and your set up doesn't need to be huge or advanced to be effective with it. Overall, it's one of the most effective and probably underrated mediums out there.

In this article, I'll cover the basics of brushes and which sizes and shapes I like to use. I will also talk about which gouache I favour the most and what my palette looks like.

I will cover some basic techniques to get you started in making good decisions as you work at using gouache more. Plus I'll cover layering paints and how to build up value and colour with easy techniques.

Because gouache is so workable, I will cover how to use water to your advantage in lifting the medium up and pushing pigment around after it's been dry. I'll also cover how to use the dry brush to your advantage, using the texture of the paper and paint underneath to create strokes and blend colour.

Gouache can also be used as watered down as watercolour for blooms and washes. I'll cover how to use these as a base to work over with more opaque strokes.

Brynn specialises in creature design, fantasy illustration and visual development for film, games and publishing. She lives and works in Oakland, California. See her work at www.brynnart.com.

❝This versatile medium is used in film and animation for layouts, concepts and backgrounds❞

GET STARTED WITH GOUACHE

Discover what tools and materials you need and some basic techniques.

MATERIALS

PAINTS
■ Holbien Artist's Gouache

SURFACE
■ Bristol, Heavy Sketchbook Paper, Watercolour Cotton Rag Paper

BRUSHES
■ Watercolour Brushes sizes: 16, 6, 6 square, 3/0

OTHER
■ Blackwing Palomino Pencil, Paper Towels, Kneaded Eraser

1 Brushes

Gouache brushes are basically watercolour brushes. They tend to be made from natural or synthetic fibers and come in a variety of shapes and sizes. I use round brushes quite a bit, but round out my toolkit with square brushes too. Because the medium can be pushed around on paper so easily, the shape of brush isn't as important as oil or acrylic paints. Always keep your brushes wet as you work. This will help spread the gouache and keep it workable as you paint.

2 Paints

I prefer Holbien Artist's Gouache, but you'll need to experiment with brands to find out which you enjoy working with. Like acrylics, there are lots of gouache pigments available. You only really need a spectrum of colour similar to the rainbow. You can then mix from there to achieve the colour you're looking for. You can use gouache straight from a tube or mix it on a palette. It can be watered down to look like watercolour or be applied opaque like acrylics.

3 *Staining*

Staining is similar to a glazing. Essentially I am covering the area to be painted with a bit of colour watered down with water to provide a base to work from. I start by mixing my colour and then picking it up with a wet brush. This will help the pigment move around the paper easier. Using even strokes and refilling my brush as needed, I lay in an even coat around the area I want to be painted.

4 *Opaque layers*

Opaque layers are used to hide layers underneath; similar to painting in acrylic. Because gouache has such a rich and vibrant quality, similar to pastels, it's used in sort of a rough way. The medium has a very tactile look. Using the swatch from before, I lay in a cloud shape with opaque paint to cover the previous layer. This means I am adding hardly any water at all to the paint as I move it around the paper.

5 *Softening edges*

Like watercolour, gouache can be reworked hours or even days after it has been applied. In fact, it stays workable almost indefinitely. To create a gradient between strokes, I load up my brush with water and apply it to the already dry stroke of pink gouache. I pull the pigment into the purple stoke and blend the two together. You can use your brush to push the pigment from side to side to achieve a good blend.

6 *Dry brushing*

Dry brushing is a method of layering colour in a way that preserves texture. Using my brush, I load it with semi-wet gouache. I brush it out a bit, emptying my brush until only about 30% of the original load is left. Then with quick strokes and no water, I swipe the brush across the surface quickly and lightly. You can see how the texture of the paper and brush helps create a ragged effect.

QUICK TIPS

GOING FURTHER WITH GOUACHE

● Paper towels can be used to blot up colour like watercolour. Use water to lift out gouache from the paper and soak up with a paper towel.

● Scan in pencil drawings at high resolution and print them out on heavy watercolour paper, according to your manufacturer's instructions. From here, you can paint away on an almost perfect replica of your pencil sketch. Use this technique to try out colour ideas or end up with two originals!

7 *Blurred brushstrokes*

Blurred brushstrokes are similar to scumbling. You can use the brush and pigment to mix and blend colours as you paint on the paper. This is a more organic way of painting but it offers a looser look in colour and texture. Using my brush, I grab colour from my palette and place it on the paper, being careful not to blend too much. This can begin to look muddy. The key to is not overwork anything.

8 *Blooms*

Gouache is a water-based medium, so you can water down to react and move around like watercolour. Blooms can be used to add in a base of colour you can then paint on top of. I load my brush with lots of water and a little pigment then I apply it to the paper. Using more water and a different colour, I blot blobs of colour into the puddle on the paper. See how the colour spreads and bleeds into the paper.

ART THEORY

Core skills

MASTERING PERSPECTIVE

PAUL TYSALL explains how to use perspective correctly in your painting and drawing.

To imbue our flat, two dimensional marks with the illusion of depth requires a solid understanding and application of perspective. Once you master depicting three-dimensional forms on a two-dimensional surface, your work becomes instantly relatable to the viewer, which is why getting it right takes a lot of practice and study. Mastering perspective is literally full of ups and downs and wrong directions.

We're going to assume you understand the fundamental principles of perspective:

❝ **Perspective is all about knowing where and how to establish your guides** ❞

that over distance objects become smaller, until they can no longer be perceived at their vanishing point. In fact, we are so accustomed to seeing this effect within our own surroundings that it can be very frustrating when we get it wrong in our drawings. Much like breaking complex objects down into basic geometric shapes (see page 14), the secret to using perspective is all about knowing where and how to establish your guides, whilst also recognising the mistakes that have crept in and understanding how to rectify them.

We're opening up with looking at linear perspective, more commonly referred to as one-point (or single-point) perspective. We'll illustrate this phenomena with an interior study: enclosed spaces remove the surrounding world from view and invariably reduce the observable effects of perspective to a single vanishing point.

Then over the page we look at both two-point perspective and foreshortening. The former will be illustrated as an urban landscape drawing with architecture, as a building described in two-point perspective is immediately more dynamic.

It's worth noting that a scene can have numerous vanishing points for each set of parallel lines that form a viewable object, so pick and frame your main subject carefully to ensure a clear, distinct and harmonious perspective drawing.
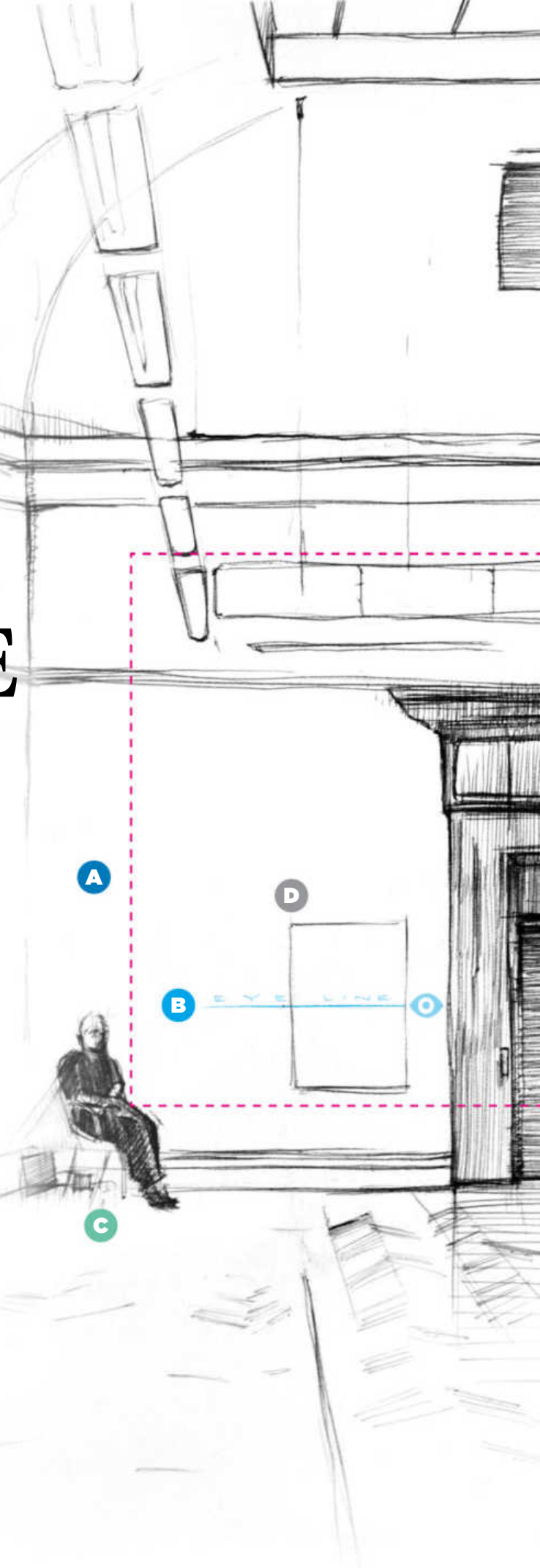
ANATOMY OF A ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE DRAWING

What makes up single-point perspective and how it creates strong focal points.

A *One-point perspective*
One-point perspective is where a scene has a single vanishing point. All the objects that are parallel to the viewer are represented as parallel lines. The lines that make up the perpendicular elements will recede and finally converge at a single vanishing point on the horizon or eye

B *The eye line*
When drawing a scene that has no visible horizon (like an interior that has no view to the external horizon) you need to establish an eye level to act as the artificial horizon on which to place your vanishing point. Holding out a pencil horizontally, with your arm straight and head level, align the pencil with your eyes. The imagined horizontal line before you is your artificial horizon. This should be established across the paper, relative to

C *Narrative tool*
In this scene, Do Ho Suh has constructed the corridor of a city flat from translucent fabric: the effect is like viewing a drawing with construction lines made real. You could argue the main subject is the art installation, but as the single point perspective tends to pull the eye to the vanishing point a second narrative is introduced; we're drawn to the person sat by the door.

D *Fixed point in space*
In this example we've positioned ourselves adjacent to the vertical left edge of the poster. Look for an object that aligns with your vanishing point for reference. To check the converging angle of an object to the vanishing point, hold out your pencil and align it to the line you wish to draw. Return it to the drawing surface, maintaining the angle. Note where the imagined line appears on the surface and sketch the line along the imagined path.

E *When one becomes two*
Sometimes it can be tricky to determine when a scene might not be a single point perspective drawing but require two-point perspective. To avoid this, make sure your vanishing point is kept within the central third of the drawing, then the visible parallel planes will remain horizontal.
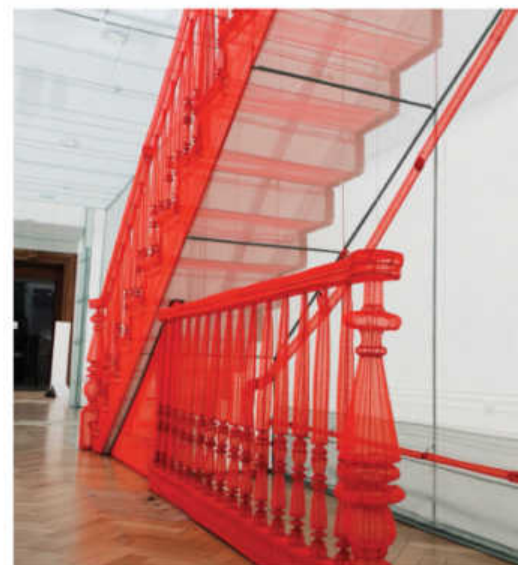
3 & 0-POINT EXPLAINED

LOOK UP AND SEE

Stand up close to the exterior corner of a building, look up and observe what happens to the left and right building edges in your peripheral vision. You'll notice they appear angled, and if drawn, the converging edge lines would meet at a vanishing point in the sky above you. This is 3-point perspective.
The same effect can be seen when looking down at a tall building from an even higher vantage point above: this time the vanishing point disappears below the Earth's surface.
What happens when there are no parallel lines in a scene (nature not being a fan of straight lines)? Then the scene has zero-point perspective.
Stand in the middle of a natural forest and you could establish a single-point perspective drawing by using a central vanishing point, but two-point perspective would be lost in the chaos – unless the trees have been planted in rows (man-made), which reintroduces parallel geometry, making it easier to introduce depth planes.

ANATOMY OF A
TWO-POINT PERSPECTIVE DRAWING

Subjects drawn using two-point (and multi-point) perspective are immediately more dynamic.

A *Two-point perspective*
A two-point perspective drawing has two vanishing points placed on the horizon. The effect is seen here: the left facade recedes at an angle, which equates to a vanishing point a few inches off the page, whilst the right side's vanishing point would be four or more pages out to the right.

B *Short plane*
Our viewing angle to this side plane is deeper. The optical effect is both vertical and horizontal. Lines following this plane are more compressed in scale and relative to one another in distance.

C *Long plane*
Our viewing angle to this front facing plane is shallow. Subsequently all the horizontal lines that follow this plane will converge at a vanishing point further beyond the frame's edge. Notice how the lines above the eye line that make up the windows recede downwards towards the vanishing point, whereas those lines drawn below the eye line, such as the pavement's edge, recede upwards.

D *Vantage point*
In the same way that we start a drawing of a cube with the nearest edge, the same applies here. The closest corner of the building (in relation to us) is the first vertical line to establish. Whenever possible look for ways to alter your viewing angle before starting a drawing. Here we've sat on the floor to exaggerate the lines of perspective.

TWO-POINT PERSPECTIVE THUMBNAIL GUIDE

Before your draw your guides, it helps to draw a guide.

TONAL DISTANCE

IMPLYING DEPTH

If you plan to take your drawing into the shading stage, it's worth noting tone can also imply depth in a drawing or painting. For instance, when we study objects far away in a landscape scene, they seem to have less contrast compared to nearby objects. This is due to the atmosphere between us and those distant elements, which is why it's commonly referred to as atmospheric perspective (or aerial perspective). Earth's atmosphere is dense with moisture, even on warm, dry days, and these moisture droplets absorb and bounce light, making it harder to perceive their detail. This natural occurrence is more noticeable on a misty day when the local atmosphere is very dense with moisture droplets.

1 Thumbnail guide

On most occasions one (if not both) vanishing points in a two-point perspective scene will end up somewhere outside the frame of your drawing surface. Consequently, it helps to draw a small, basic version of your planned drawing that includes both vanishing points. In the top right corner of your surface, draw a rectangle frame. This represents the entire drawing surface.
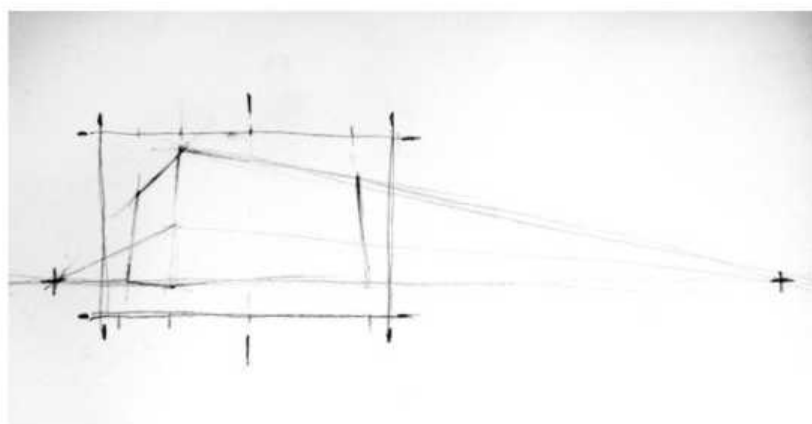
2 Peripheral vision

Establish the horizon line, relative to its spacial location on the drawing surface. Then very roughly sketch your main focal subject. Look for the dominant lines that express both planes receding to their vanishing points and indicate where they end on the horizon line. With the thumbnail drawing held up in front of you, focus on your main subject and mentally plot where your vanishing points are in your peripheral vision using your guide.

FORESHORTENING IN FIGURE DRAWING

When an object is close to the viewer, but also receding away from them, the planes that compose that object optically compress, making them appear shorter than they actually are. When this happens as an artist you have to remember you are simply recording the scene as it is, and although achieving a technically correct drawing might appear jarring to the viewer, if measured and accurate then the drawing should remain unaltered. Does this mean you have to be a slave to foreshortening? Not all the time. Sometimes a liberal application of artistic licence when resolving foreshortening can yield more visually pleasing results.

Core skills

MASTER THE GOLDEN RATIO

Painters, sculptors and architects have used the golden ratio for centuries.
CHRIS LEGASPI explains what it is, and how you can apply it to your art.

The golden ratio is also known as the golden mean, golden section or divine proportion. It refers to the mathematical ratio of phi, which has a value of 1.618 and is considered to be beautiful and harmonious.

Artists have used the golden ratio for centuries. Architects have also used it extensively in their measurements and proportions. Painters and sculptors from the classical period to the Renaissance used it in their works of art.

The golden ratio originally comes from the ancient Greek mathematicians. It's a measure closely related to the square root of pi and was originally discovered when the Greeks began examined five-sided figures like the pentagon. When drawn geometrically, the golden ratio creates what is known as a golden rectangle, which is composed of a perfect square and smaller rectangular section. Each of the rectangular sections of the golden rectangle can be subdivided into infinity by rotating the measurement a ¼ turn. This sequence is also known as the Fibonacci sequence.

If the points of the Fibonacci sequence are plotted and connected by a curve, it creates a Fibonacci spiral, which is also known as a golden spiral. This spiral intersects at every point where the rectangle divides, according to the golden ratio of 1.618. The Fibonacci sequence and spiral also give us the phi grid.

The phi grid is a simplification of the the golden ratio and is a great tool for composition. Many of today's modern cameras even have the phi grid built in to their viewfinders.

The golden spiral and phi grid are powerful tools for composition. Even though they are mostly known for architecture and landscapes, I like to use them for multiple subjects. In this article, I'll demonstrate their usefulness using three different subjects: a still-life, outdoor landscape, and finally a portrait painting.

Digital images courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

> **Even though it is mostly known for architecture and landscapes, I like to use the golden ratio for multiple subjects**

USE THE GOLDEN RATIO IN PRACTICE

How the Golden Ratio can inform your art and lead you toward eye-pleasing compositions.

TOPICS COVERED

THEORY
■ Golden ratio
■ Golden rectangle
■ Golden spiral
■ Phi grid

***PRACTICE***
■ Still-life
■ Landscape
■ Portrait

1 *Focal points*
The golden ratio comes from the world of mathematics, but artists have used it for centuries to create beautiful compositions. In this painting by Pietro Paolini, the golden ratio and golden spiral are used to draw the eye to the main focal point.
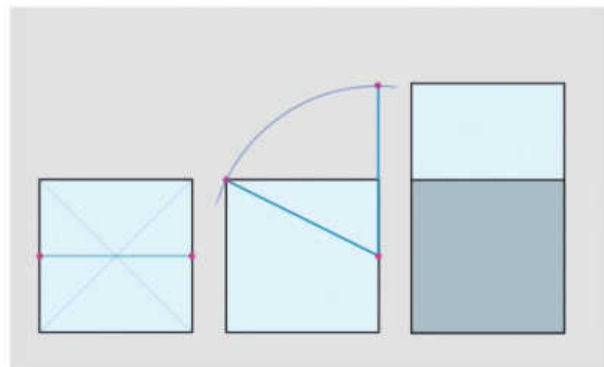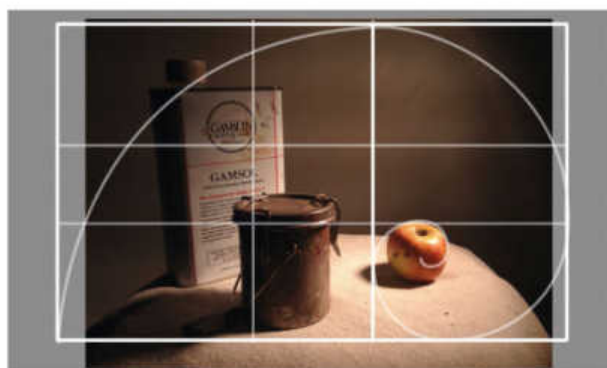

2 *Make a golden rectangle*
To make a golden rectangle, draw a perfect square and divide in half to find the centre point. Next, take the distance from the centre point to a corner and use that distance to extend the box from the centre point. Complete the rectangle to make a rectangle that measures 1 x 1.618.
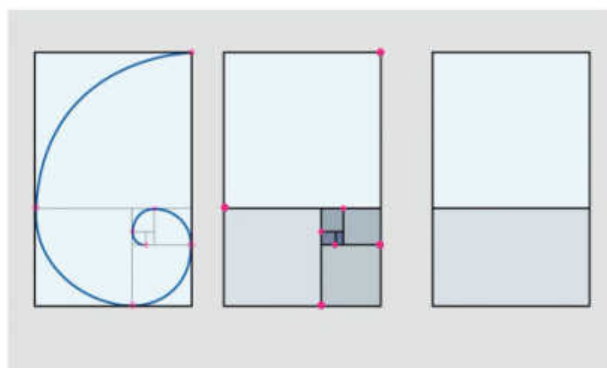
3 Make a golden spiral

To create a golden spiral, start with a golden rectangle and divide a perfect square to get the first rectangle section. Divide the rectangle section with the same ratio to create another golden rectangle and continue the process. Draw a curve that connects at every intersecting point of the golden ratio, which creates a perfect golden spiral.

4 Moving the eyes

The golden spiral is a powerful tool for moving the eye in a picture. In this painting, the flowers in the lower right follow the golden spiral up and to the right. The detail in the upper left follows the spiral down and towards the centre of the spiral and the main focal point of the face.

THE PHI GRID

A WAY TO SIMPLIFY THE GOLDEN RATIO

One way to simplify and apply the golden ratio is with the phi grid. The phi grid is created by subdividing the golden rectangle to create four dividing lines and nine sections. To create the grid, I start with a golden rectangle and subdivide to get my first section (marked in blue). Next, I mirror the measurements (length and width) and then extend the dividing lines to complete the grid. The phi grid is a great tool to create guidelines when placing objects in a composition. In the painting, the phi grid is used to line up the horizon, buildings and also the vertical elements in the composition.

5 Still-life

This first demonstration is a still life. Once I have my objects arranged along the phi grid, I start with a small tonal sketch. This sketch helps me to practise drawing in the golden ratio, and helps me arrange my values in a dynamic way that also follows the golden spiral.

6 Pencil drawing

I begin the painting with a pencil drawing. The medium used will be watercolour so I use ordinary graphite pencil to draw on toned paper. The sketch of the phi grid and golden spiral helps me to draw in the golden ratio and place my images in the composition before applying paint.

7 Light and shadow

Using the drawing as a guide, I block in the darks and shadows with warm grey tones. These tones create a dynamic light and shadow pattern. They also help me to lock in the composition by blocking the background, dark left section and the lights around the focal point, the apple.

8 Add colour

Next, I add the first wash of colour. The red colour sets the apple apart as the focal point. The wash of warm colours also add a sense of light to the metallic objects and table surface. To help the forms turn and feel more realistic, I soften the core shadow edges.

One of the ways I like to use the golden ratio is to help crop photographs for reference or painting. To make the composition better, I start by applying the golden rectangle to a section of the photograph. Many cameras have the phi grid built in, but this was done using photo software. I start by lining up the upper guideline and the left guideline with the intended focal point. Next, I apply the golden spiral to help me locate secondary focal points. Here the pagoda in the background leads into the water reflections, which leads the eye through the picture.

9 *More colour*

Next, I add even more saturated colour. I draw the eye to the apple even more, by adding saturated reds and yellows, creating a rich colour accent at the focal point. I also add more colour and variation to the other objects in the scene and add warm light tones to the table surface.

10 *Finishing touches*

To complete the painting, I add highlights, dark accents and other fine details. I add the brightest highlight on the apple to create strong contrast. I also add along variation in brushwork and technique for even more emphasis. Fine details are added to the other objects to create more depth and realism.

11 *Landscape*

The next example is a landscape painting. It's based on a photo that I've already cropped using the phi grid. I then apply the golden ratio to help me place the focal point lighthouse. The golden spiral also helps place secondary focal points and other accent areas.
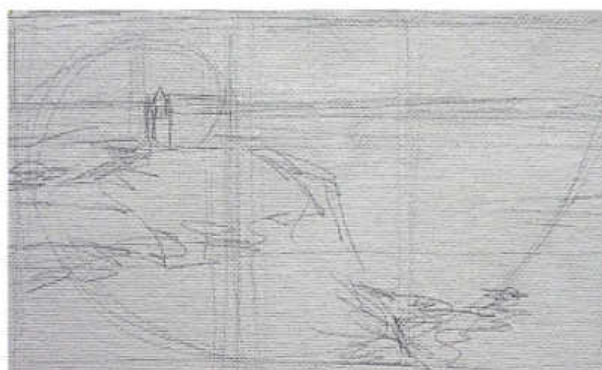
12 *Loose sketch*

I begin the painting with a pencil drawing. I start by loosely sketching the phi grid and the golden spiral. I then place the key element according to the golden spiral and golden section. The spiral helps me to place the shape of the rock and waves in the right section of the composition.

13 *Back to front*

When painting landscapes, I like to work back to front. Here I start by painting the distant sky followed by the water. Because the drawing and design is so simple, I can really focus on getting good colour and good colour relationships. I also add subtle gradations to make the colours more lively.

14 *Add colour*

Next, I block in the dark rock mass in the lower left section. I focus on the value first, but I also make sure to add as much saturated warm colour as possible to separate the rocks from the cool background. This stage also sets me up for the focal point and finishing touches.

15 Finishing touches

To complete the painting, I add the small details and finishing touches. First, I add detail to the lighthouse and to the surrounding area. I also add the bright waves and surf in the lower right. I also make sure to use thicker paint in these areas to really help draw the eye.

16 Placing fine detail

Above I've zoomed in to demonstrate how I've used the golden ratio and spiral to help me place the fine details. The lighthouse is divided almost perfectly into a golden rectangle. In the lower corner, I've used thicker paint but also accents of warm colour and cool colour to move the eye along the golden spiral.

THE GOLDEN RATIO IN ANATOMY

IT'S NATURE'S TOOL AS WELL

The golden ratio is a mathematical ratio that appears in art but also in nature. One example is in the proportion of the human body. This painting by Rubens shows several ways how the golden rectangle can apply to the female form. First the length of her body from head to toe fits in the golden rectangle when divided at the waist. Next, her torso, measured from shoulders to hips, fits into the golden rectangle, which divides at the centre of the ribcage. Her legs fit into a golden rectangle when divided at the knee. Finally, when we examine her face, the golden rectangle is there again when divided at the eyes.

17 Portrait

The next demonstration is a portrait. I first prepare a canvas size according to the golden ratio. This canvas is 11 inches x 6.82 inches (28cm x 17.32 cm). I begin the drawing using the phi grid as a guide. I make sure to place the eye close the centre of the golden spiral.

18 Shadows

Next, I block in the shadows. Now the subject is locked in the composition. The rich warm colours also create accents at the focal point area near the eye that's at the centre of the spiral. I also make marks to plan the design of the background.

19 Colour

Next, I add half-tones, lights, and add more saturated colour to make the skin tone come alive. I draw the darks in the eyes to help refine the focal point. I also add a loose and abstract background to help balance the composition and create contrast with the rendered face.

20 Final details

To finish the painting, I refine the drawing and edges, and add fine details to the eyes, nose and mouth. I also add accents like the technique variation and thicker paint in the background. This helps move the eye along the golden spiral and make the composition more dynamic.

Core skills

USING THE RULE OF THIRDS IN ART

Whatever the subject matter, the rule of thirds is a great way to approach your composition. CHRIS LEGASPI explains how to use it effectively.

The rule of thirds states that if you divide any composition into thirds, vertically and horizontally, then place the key elements of your image either along these lines or at the junctions of them, you'll achieve a more pleasing arrangement.

Dividing your picture into nine equal sections gives you a set of two horizontal guidelines, two vertical guidelines, and four intersections which can help you to create much more interesting and dynamic compositions.

ORIGINS

The rule of thirds was originally used in classical and Renaissance painting. The term was first coined by 18th century painter John Thomas Smith. Today, it is mostly known and practised among photographers. Painters and artists use it mostly for landscapes, but it also works for any subject matter including still-lifes, figures and even portraits.

By following the guidelines and intersections created by the rule of thirds, you can more easily create compositions that are asymmetric and much more dynamic.

The other helpful function of the rule of thirds is it gives you a guide for placing focal points. If you design your focal points according to the intersections of any of the nine rectangles, your picture will have the counterbalance needed to make the composition more interesting and more compelling.

A further reason for using the rule of thirds is as a guide for eyeflow.

If you use the intersections as focal points, you can design other elements in the picture to lead the eye from one of the focal points to the other. You can even use the corners to bring the viewer into the picture or keep the eyes moving back into picture again. This kind of eyeflow adds movement and life to any composition.

Digital images courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

> **❝ The rule of thirds means you divide the picture into nine equal sections creating a set of horizontal and vertical sections or 'thirds' ❞**

20 STEPS TO PERFECT PROPORTIONS
The rule of thirds can help you create compositions that delight the eye.

TOPICS COVERED

CONCEPTS
- Origins
- Assymetry
- Focal point
- Eyeflow

SUBJECTS
- Still-life
- Landscape
- Figure painting

1 *Origins*
The rule of thirds is a compositional guideline. Its origins go back to classical and Renaissance paintings, but it is mostly known as a compositional tool used by photographers. This painting by Valentin de Boulogne shows how the main characters are all placed on the upper dividing line, creating a dynamic arrangement of figures.

2 *Use for landscapes*
The rule of thirds is mostly known as a tool for composing landscapes. In this painting by Pierre Henri de Valenciennes, the horizon is placed in the lower thirds, and the large mass of mountains and scenery is placed in the left section, to create a more dynamic scene.
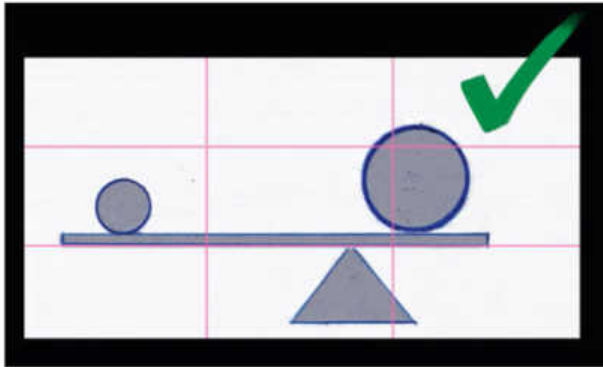
3 Asymmetric compositions

The main function of the rule of thirds is to help create asymmetric compositions. If the elements in a picture are centred and too balanced, it becomes boring. If the images are offset using the rule of thirds, the asymmetry and counterbalance of elements creates a much more dynamic picture.

4 Focal points

Another great way to use rule of thirds is to help place focal points. In this portrait painting, the eyes fall on the upper horizontal line and leads to the second focal point in the ear. Other points of interest such as the warm triangle of light also fall on an intersection of guidelines.

HOW IT WORKS

THE THEORY BEHIND IT

The Rule of Thirds works because it demands that the artist makes one element more dominant than another. This dominance creates an imbalance, and an imbalance of any sort will always attract the viewer's eye. Bisecting an image perfectly in half creates the least amount of interest, because everything is equally balanced.

5 Eyeflow

Eyeflow is another great use of the rule of thirds. In this painting by Rubens, the main focal point of the boar is placed at an intersection. Secondary points of interest fall on intersections as well and the action of the poses lead the eye from one focal point or intersection to another.
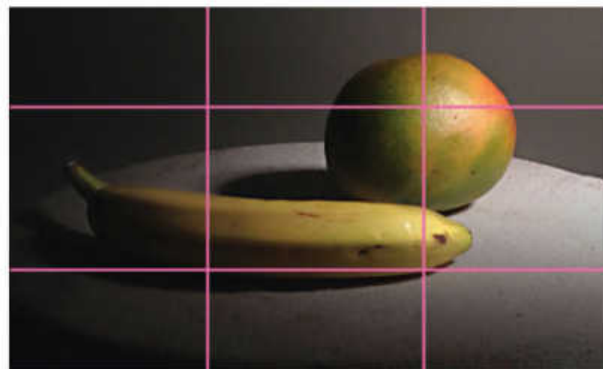
6 Still-life

The first demonstration is a still-life. I begin by arranging my objects so that the composition lines up with the guidelines and intersections created by the rule of thirds. The banana and shadow follow the bottom guideline while the highlight on the mango falls on the upper-right intersection, creating a dynamic focal point.
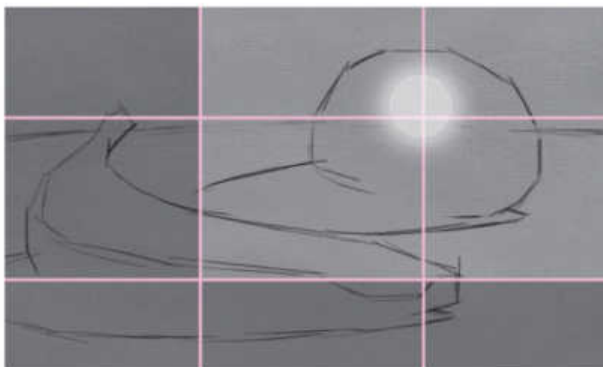
7 Intersecting guides

The next step is to create the drawing using the intersections as guides. I also create a value thumbnail so that I can plan my dark value composition. Here, the lower and left thirds are dominated by darks while the bright highlight in the upper section creates a dynamic focal point.
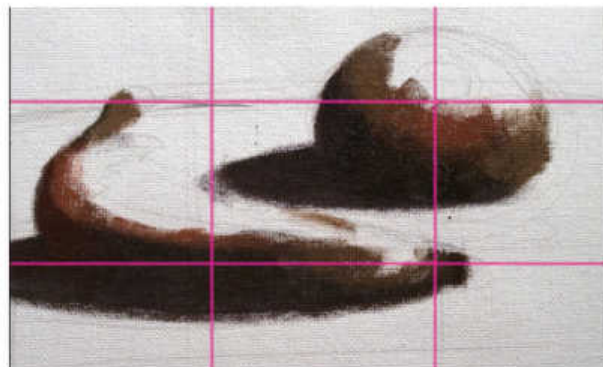
8 Blocking in

I begin the painting by blocking in the dark shadows. I also add more saturated colours into the shadows and transition tones. To make the composition more dynamic and asymmetric, I purposely straighten the drawing of the banana's shadow. This gives it a stronger horizontal alignment with the bottom guideline.
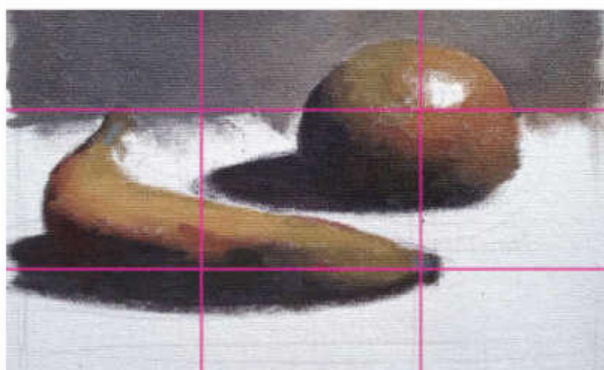
9 Add colour

Next, I add the half-tone shapes and more colour. Here the upper third is entirely a dark mid-tone that will help to frame the highlight focal point. I also straighten the curve of the table surface so that it lines up with the upper guideline and creates a more asymmetric value composition.

10 Final touches

To complete the painting, light tones, highlights and finishing touches are added. The light on the table surface fills out the lower 2/3rds of the composition. Thicker and brighter paint and technique variation are added at the highlight, which really draws the eye to the main focal point.

WHY THIRDS?

THE NUMBER IS NOT IMPORTANT

Why is the rule of thirds, and not the rule of fourths? Actually, the fact that the composition is divided into precise thirds is really of minimal significance. You could divide a composition in fourths, fifths or even tenths. So long as there's some sort of imbalance, the composition will exhibit tension. This concept of imbalance applies to many aspects of composition, including value and colour.
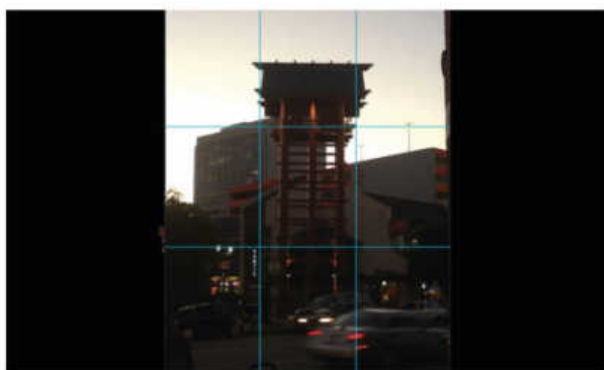
11 Urban landscape

The next demonstration is a urban landscape. I slightly "break" the rule of thirds by using it in a vertical or portrait orientation. The reference image here shows that I will have to align the central structure with the right vertical guideline to give me more asymmetry and counterbalance in this composition.
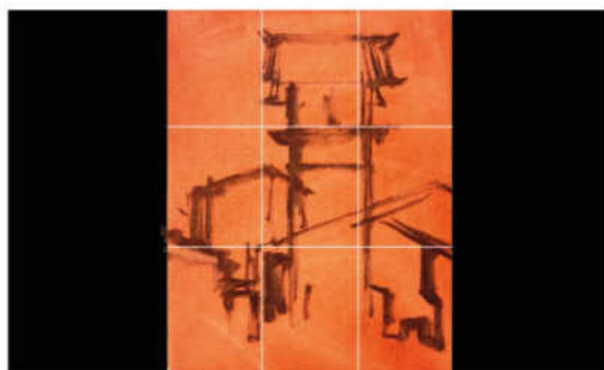
12 Drawing and design

I begin the painting with the drawing and design. In my drawing, I move the centre object to the right so that it lines up with the right vertical guideline. I also design the other elements in the bottom of the composition to line up with the lower guideline.
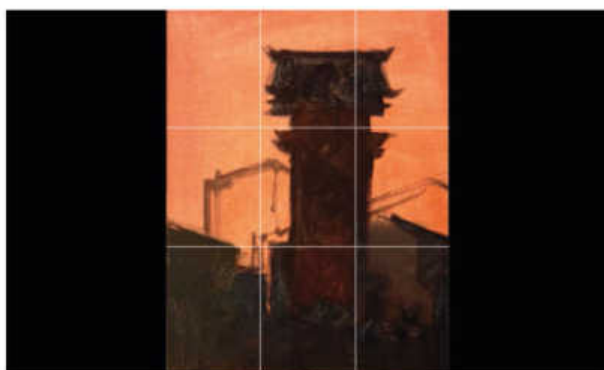
13 Lock in major elements

Next, I block in the darks and add colour in the shadows. This step helps me to lock in the major elements of the composition such as the central focal point and the dark lower thirds section. This creates an interesting tension with the upper 2/3rds of light.

14 Half-tones and lights

Next, I add half-tones and lights. This locks in the major elements of the design and composition. The tower focal point lines up nicely with the right guideline and the darks with the lower guideline. The colours in the sky also add colour and value contrast with the darks in the lower third of the picture.
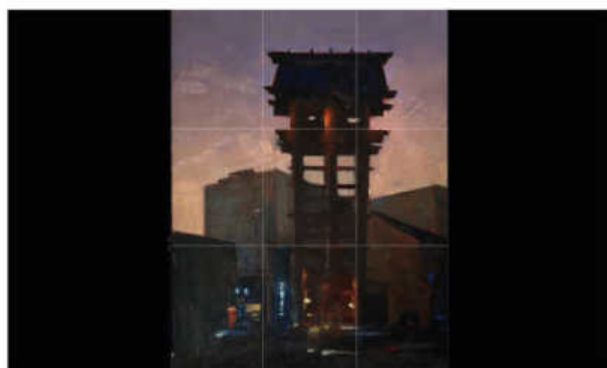
15 Final details
To complete the painting, I add details in the dark foreground along with more colour and technique variation. This also creates more depth and movement. I also clean up the shapes in the central tower structure and use the upper guideline to help me place the small details and horizontal beam shapes.
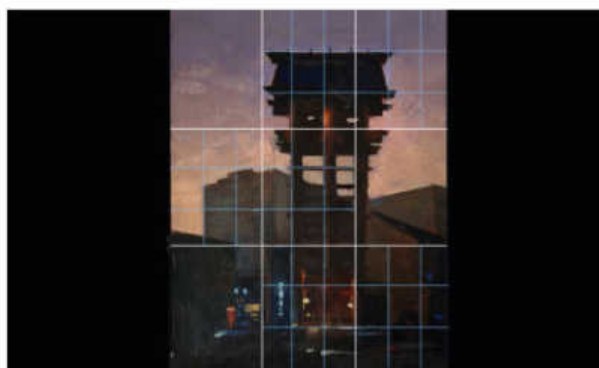

16 Sub-divisions
This image shows how the rule of thirds is sub-divided in this painting. The top of the tower lines up with a guideline. The central elements line up nicely with a guideline. And many of the lower details, colours and small strokes line up with guidelines in the lower section.

RULE OF THIRDS & COLOUR

ANOTHER USE FOR THE RULE OF THIRDS

The rule of thirds can also apply to colour. Try breaking your composition down into three distinct temperature ranges: warm, cool and neutral. Just like value, restricting certain areas to a temperature will create a more legible composition and a greater sense of depth. You can arrange these temperatures in any order. Use triptych schemes for colour temperature and value for maximum effect, ensuring focus and legibility in even the busiest of compositions.
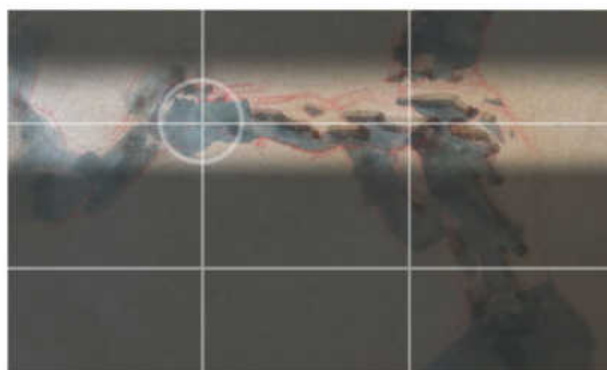
17 Figure painting
This next example is a figure painting in watercolour. I begin the drawing and shadow block-in by using the upper guideline to line up the main action of the pose. This sets up a dynamic, asymmetric composition. I also line up the face with the right-vertical guideline to create a secondary focal point.

18 Asymmetric counterbalance
Next, I block in the dark and light half-tones. I also add as much colour as possible and begin to soften the core shadow edges. Having the dark shadows and half-tones dominate the right thirds of the composition creates an asymmetric arrangement of value. This helps to counterbalance the main focal point.

19 Add highlights
Next, I add the highlights. Since the highlights fall on the upper guideline, it helps reinforce the composition. I also add highlights on the main focal point. To counterbalance the image, I also add intense red colour along the right-vertical guideline. Now I have a simple and dynamic arrangement of values and colour.

20 Final touches
To complete the painting, I add more colour to the focal point hand. I also add variation in technique to really draw the eye to the punching hand. For counterbalance, I add saturated reds to the eyes in shadow. This gives the image a secondary focal point and a dynamic eye-flow to the composition.

PAINTING
PROJECTS

Project

PAINT A VINTAGE PIN-UP PORTRAIT

FIONA STEPHENSON shows you how to create vintage-looking pin-up art using traditional oil-on-canvas painting techniques

Working in oil can be tricky. However, the flexibility you have working into wet paint and the resulting vibrant colours outweigh any problems.

I taught myself to oil paint by copying traditional pin-up artists from the 1950s, so my methods may not be correct but the end result will look reasonably authentic. The mannequin is useful for getting the clothing to look right, establishing where the creases are, where the light falls and so on. Your painting will be more convincing if you give these details some time.

Pin-up is light-hearted, not cynical, so bear this in mind when deciding on a pose. A classic pin-up pose typically has delicately arranged hands and demurely positioned legs – it shouldn't look sleazy.

ARTIST INSIGHT
TAKING PHOTOS

I have a Fuji Finepix HS25 camera, which I use to photograph the mannequin and other things I need to complete the artwork. I can't work without reference, so photography is crucial. It also helps to update clients on how the work is progressing.

I'm always eager to get painting, so I often rush the preparation. This has its pitfalls: here, as you'll see later, when a last-minute decision to include a ball of wool puts me under pressure, especially after the red takes days to dry. The more decisions you make early in the sketching process, the less you'll need to alter later and the more time you'll save.

My studio maximises the light. It's crucial when painting skin tones for pin-ups to have natural light rather than a daylight bulb. It's disappointing when you spend hours painting what you think is a creamy skin tone, only to discover the next day your colours look cold. The final thing I do is take my painting to a professional photographer who specialises in 2D artwork, which gives me a high-resolution image to pass on to my clients.

Fiona studied illustration at art college before becoming a letterer and colourist for comic books. She's been painting pin-up art for around 10 years and her commissioned work is mostly for advertising, although one of her paintings has featured on a DC Comics cover. You can see more of her pin-up art at www. fionastephenson.com.

Painting

1 Set up a doll reference

I use a life-size mannequin to help with the general pose. The photo is useful for lighting and reflections. If the clothing isn't convincing then the painting won't be successful. I'll put in details such as her hands later.

2 Create a pencil sketch

I'm drawing with a 6B pencil on thin cartridge paper. I erase areas to make highlights. The purpose of the sketch is to make alterations and to be sure that the composition works. I'm sure you're aware that what looks good in a photo doesn't always work as a sketch.

3 Trace the image on to canvas

I print out a large version of my sketch and trace it on to canvas using carbon paper to save time. I also photograph my own left hand making a claw-like gesture. The original hand resembled a washing-up glove – which doesn't say delicate and demure in anyone's book!

4 Raw umber acrylic line over blue line

The blue line is difficult to see, so I paint over it with acrylic raw umber. This is because acrylic will dry quicker than oil. This part of the process is just a guide, so the line doesn't have to be perfect.

5 Underpaint the face and hair in oil

I always start with the face. I'm loosely blocking in with a size 8 brush – the detail will come later. I predominantly use chrome yellow, cadmium yellow, cadmium red, cadmium red deep and raw sienna to create warm skin tones.

6 Underpaint the catsuit

The figure's catsuit will eventually be black, so I'm underpainting in cobalt blue so that the black won't appear flat and dull. I always mix my oil paint with liquin to aid drying time.

7 Background underpaint
I paint a wash of burnt umber and cadmium red light for the background colour. I paint in thin layers, gradually building up strength and detail. I've decided my colour scheme will be predominantly black, red and creams.

8 Start the catsuit and continue with the face and hair

I continue to build detail on the face and hair. I stop when I feel something has been achieved and wait for it to dry. Using paynes grey I work on the catsuit, adding red and raw sienna to build depth.

9 Tackle the catsuit look and chair

I mix in alkyd white (which is another aid to faster drying times) to create highlights and shine on the PVC of the catsuit. I refer back to my original photo regularly, because it's essential to get this right. I then start to apply raw sienna and white wash to the chair.

10 Background colour and shadow

I continue to build up the background colour and shadow behind the chair. I'm beginning to have concerns that the chair will dominate, so I paint over the wicker with raw umber and red, which I hope will make it recede.

11 The chair proves troublesome

Despite my best efforts, the wicker chair is still proving to be problematic. I'm constantly changing brush sizes and trying to introduce interesting detail into the object, such as where the woven bands intersect, while at the same time not allowing the chair to be the feature of the scene. It's not easy!

12 Background colour and PVC reflections

I use white to work on the PVC reflections, which gives them more detail. I also decide to apply cadmium red without liquin to the background to achieve a vibrant colour. This may take an age to dry.
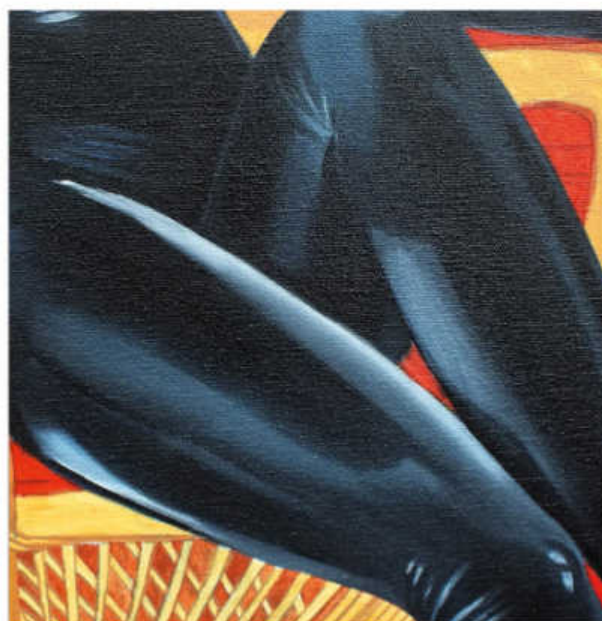
VARNISH TIP
DRYING ADVICE
Liquin not only aids drying time, it also gives your oil painting a gloss, so there's no need to apply varnish.

13 Finish the details – the chair, kitten, hair and eyes

After a frustrating wait of five long days for the red background to dry, I can finally put my finishing touches to the figure's hair and her pet kitten. I've changed the woman's eyes to green so they match the kitten's, and the face and chair details are also completed.

14 Last-minute decision

I decide to paint a ball of wool to make the composition more playful. It must have been in my subconscious when I did the sketch, but it's taken a while to register. I start with a quick green underpaint for the wool.

15 Final background coat and wool

I mix cobalt blue with chrome yellow for the wool, in part because this colour matches the eyes. I also freshen the background with a wash of cadmium red and cadmium red deep mixed with liquin. I'm using a large brush to eliminate brush marks. And that, as they say, is that. I hope you enjoyed reading about my painting process!

ARTIST INSIGHT

PACKAGING MY ARTWORK

I work mostly for the US and Canada, so packaging artwork safely is important. I use foamboard, which is strong but light, and polythene bags to protect the art from any moisture. I insure all my artwork, and this is factored in when giving out quotes.

Project

HOW TO PAINT WITH ACRYLIC WASHES

CRAWW demonstrates his technique for building colour and depth using multiple layers of acrylic wash and explains how you can use it in your own art.

While I work in a variety of mediums including just about everything from graphite and ink to charcoal and oils, I enjoy the flexibility of acrylics: they can be used direct from the tube to create thick dense colour or, as we'll do here, watered down and layered to give depth and an almost ethereal quality to light.

I'm currently focussed on a body of work for a show later in the year at Antler Gallery in Portland, and this painting is part of that.

Living in the countryside I constantly find myself inspired by natural forms – as much by death, bones and decay as pretty flowers and cute animals. My work embraces these themes, exploring the beauty to be found in the complete cycle of birth, death, growth and decay. Melancholic but romantic.

As well as a focus on nature, I enjoy using heavily stylised female figurative imagery, often with a focus on the hands. I use a variety of reference material, from fashion

ARTIST INSIGHT
GENTLY DOES IT
Working with paper and washes needs a gentle touch, especially when transferring the drawing. Don't overwork the drawing – continual erasing will roughen the surface and cause potential blemishes further down the line. I use a putty rubber and roll it over areas, lifting rather than erasing mistakes.

magazines and websites through to working with live models, but I find that the imagery becomes my own only when I'm able to tap into an emotive or expressive quality. My method of painting and my interpretation of forms, the exaggerated hands and the stylised figures enable me to do this.

As a self-taught artist, it's a style of painting that I have developed over the past few years, and I've learned a few tricks and techniques that make it work for me. My process is very much a stream-of-consciousness flow. I seldom start with a clear idea but really enjoy seeing how my work almost takes on a life of its own, growing from absent-minded doodles, through development in my sketchbook to painting the finished piece.

I try to embrace a spontaneity in my work, and the drips and splashes of watered-down acrylic lend themselves well to that process – even accidents that seem disastrous at the time. Let me take you through my process of painting when working with acrylic paints.

Craww is a fine artist and illustrator working in Sheffield, England. A habitual doodler, his work embraces a variety of mediums including graphite, acrylics and oil painting. He has enjoyed successful shows in London, San Francisco and Los Angeles. www.craww.com

Painting

1 Start with sketchbooks and ideas

My work always starts in the sketchbook. It's a risk-free environment to explore ideas and hopefully surprise yourself. I'm a constant doodler and I try and keep things as loose as possible throughout this stage, allowing for room to explore the idea as it progresses.

2 Transfer the drawing

I prefer to redraw rather than transfer my sketch using a light box or projector. It takes longer but retains the spontaneity, and again enable the idea to develop. I probably spend too long on this stage, but it does help me get a feel for the piece and also acts as an underpainting.

3 Prepare for the initial wash

Using a mop brush, I cover the entire surface with clean water, preparing it for the initial wash. Then I mix up the initial colour. I mix a lot of paint – in this case Prussian blue, Hookers green and a touch of Phthalo turquoise – which gives the colour a little more depth, using a lot of water to thin it down.

4 Apply the first wash

Again using my mop brush, I load it with a lot of paint and wash it onto the wet paper, working across the paper and allowing the water to carry the paint down the painting. Things can look a little messy at this stage, but I enjoy the spontaneity, seeing how the paint goes down, and it will be worked on and refined later.

5 Work with the wash

While it's still wet, I start to work into it, getting a feel for highlights by lifting paint off with a clean/dry mop brush. I also use a water spray from a garden centre to wash areas if I want to blend paint or remove it altogether. I repeat this process, gradually building layers of colour.

6 Build colour and tone

Each layer is a very slight development on the last, creating denser colour and tone. As the process continues I can refine areas more. When I want to create a harder edge I will paint an area with water first and then apply the wash, letting the paint run into the water and along the edge.

7 *Blending colour*
Working wet on wet produces subtle blends. I
enjoy the softness this gives, but if I want to stop the paint
running into an area I'll use a hair dryer to dry areas as I'm
working. I don't worry about the drips – they're part of the
fun – but if they do interfere with something I will lift them
with the brush or wash them off with the water spray.

8 Add detail

I now want to give the painting some form. I've aimed for an overall mid-tone at this stage and now I'll work with a denser mix of paint, using a selection of long-handled brushes to start to establish darker areas, enhance contrast and bring out key forms and shapes.

9 Add colour

Up until this point I've been working on tone and form. Now I want to add colour. Still working with thin washes, first I add a mix of Yellow ochre, muted with Buff titanium, to the figures. At this stage I'm not worried about the final hues – I'm just laying down a ground colour.

ARTIST INSIGHT

WALK AWAY FROM IT

Sometimes it's easy to get too close to a painting, obsessing over perceived mistakes and errors. Come back to the painting the next day with a fresh pair of eyes – sometimes what you thought was a mistake is what gives a painting its character, a happy accident adding interest and depth.

10 Keep it loose

I then add a wash of Alizarin crimson mixed with Quinacridone burnt orange to the flowers area. I'm not painting the flowers as such, rather adding colour areas that I can play with later. It's also worth noting that however strong the colour looks when you first apply it, it'll be a lot paler once it dries.
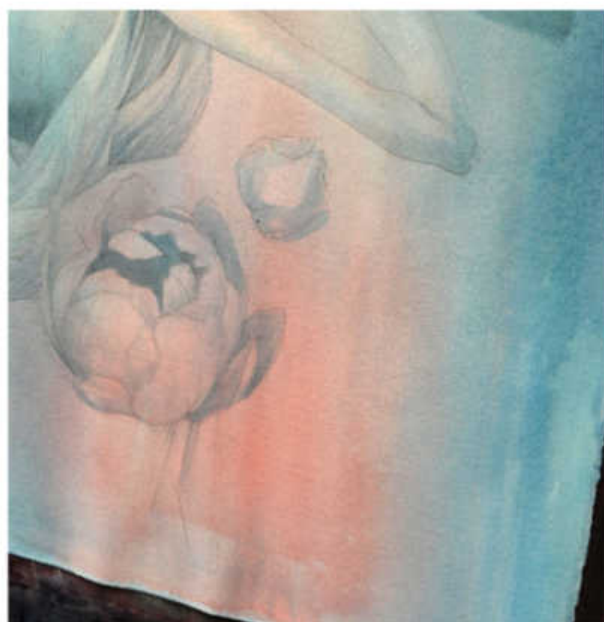
11 Layer washes

From now on it's really a matter of repeating the process, alternating between gradually building colour and tone with additional washes and working on areas of detail. It's at this stage that the painting starts to gain its depth. Colours become deeper, shadows grow darker, and detail and form are more defined.

12 Evaluate the painting

I continue to step back and evaluate. I aim to create a flow through the piece, but the composition seems to be missing something to lead the eye out, so I'm adding detail to the bottom corner. I shape it with a long-handled flat brush but purposefully keep it looser than the more defined flowers – this will create depth, helping to foreground detail.

13 *Work on detail*

Now I'm able to focus on the detail. I tend to move from my easel to a flat surface. I like to be "over" my painting at this stage. It's now that the painting starts to come to life, as I'm able to focus on the fine details that create character.

14 *Refine the work*

It's time to revisit areas to which I've previously applied rough colour. I'm now able to go in and work on them, adding refinement, detail and depth.

15 *Appraise and finalise*

The final stage is to step back again and look for any areas that need tightening up and any opportunities for additional detail to add narrative to the painting. Here I feel that some thin bones would add context to the bird skull.

PAPER TIP

THE RIGHT PAPER
With acrylic washes I use BFK Rives paper, a beautiful, soft, almost fabric-like surface that never buckles when wet.

Project

PAINT A STORYBOOK-STYLE PORTRAIT

How do you paint a fictional character? CYNTHIA SHEPPARD explains how she brought her vision of two storybook characters to life, from start to finish.

With any character portrait, the style and medium choice should reflect the character's own personality. When I set out to paint Arya and Nymeria from George R. R. Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire series, I consider whether to hire a model and do a highly-detailed photorealistic piece. But as I am doing my first sketches, I change my mind. The too-smart-for-her-own-good girl and her fantastical pet wolf seem to lend themselves better to a looser approach, like an illustration you might see in a storybook. For that reason, I decide to do a quicker oil portrait, with broader strokes, and I even leave some of the gritty underpainting showing through in the background.

After doing a couple of pages of thumbnails, I choose to work from the profile composition for its striking simplicity. I also want the viewer to feel the connection between the characters, and

possibly even get the sense that Nymeria is Arya's protector by fully enclosing her, visually, in the composition.

Another challenge was painting a girl who was described in the story as boyish and not very attractive, compared to her older sister. The way I imagine her, Arya doesn't look hideous or grotesque, just perhaps a little adult for her age, and very

plain. I plan to approach painting her more like I would paint a grown-up, leaving in facial features (such as the crease by her mouth) that I normally wouldn't paint on a child. Also, the reddish nose, long chin and thick eyebrows help make her look more like she's described in the story.

I know I'll need to work on the facial expressions throughout the process, and

from step to step you'll see them change. For example, she shouldn't look too sullen in the thumbnail, or too dull, but a character who is slightly forlorn, though strong and proud.

The colours I use need to reflect the mood of the piece, so I plan to go with a muted colour palette that shifts from cool hues in the background, to warmer ones for the characters.

Cynthia specializes in figurative art for role-playing games, collectible cards, and book covers. She works for clients including Wizards of the Coast, Pyr Books, and Fantasy Flight Games.
www.sheppard-arts.com

1 *Gather information*
The first step is always to answer the question: "What am I painting?". Since I'll be painting characters from a book, I read the book first, then write down a list of visual details about the characters in my sketchbook.

2 Sketch thumbnails

I'm now familiar with the characters' appearances and personalities. I start sketching them from my imagination. I do as many thumbnails as it takes to find a good composition. There's no limit to how many thumbnails you should do.

3 Set your value and colour roughs

Getting the lights and darks in place now will help me know where to put them through the whole painting process. I use values to separate the composition into three distinct parts: the foreground, middle ground, and background. Then I add colour.

4 Begin the drawing stage

For my drawing, I'm using a toned paper, Strathmore Art, again 400 in Grey. I use a 2B pencil to lightly sketch out the largest shapes in the composition first, then build values with a much softer 4B pencil and white charcoal.

ARTIST INSIGHT
HOMEMADE CARBON PAPER
A cheap and quick way to make your own carbon transfer paper is to coat some tracing paper with charcoal.

5 *Prepare the painting surface*

I'm painting on Strathmore 500 Series Illustration board, a thick stock with a smooth finish. After transferring my drawing to the illustration board, I fix the surface with a coat of spray fixative, and three to four coats of acrylic matte medium.

ARTIST INSIGHT
SAVE TIME, START IN ACRYLIC
You can use acrylic paint to speed up the drying process, and start painting in oil immediately after.
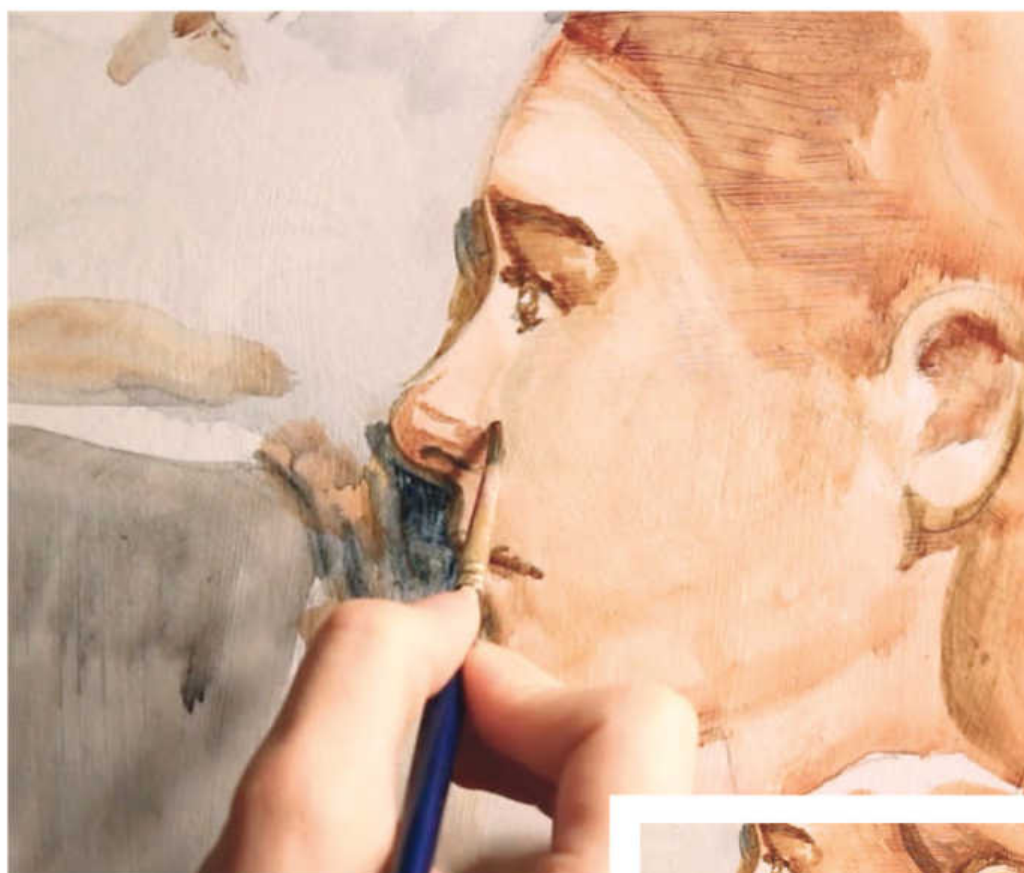
6 *Start underpainting*

I want to tone the illustration board, while beginning to define forms. I have a distinct cool-to-warm shift, so I'll use Ultramarine Blue in the background, and Burnt Sienna in the foreground, both mixed with Burnt Umber for tone.

7 *Choose and mix your oil colours*

I choose a limited palette that I can mix together to achieve light skin tones and warm and cool greys for the dire wolf: Payne's Grey, Prussian Blue, Burnt Umber, Ultramarine Blue, Alizarin Crimson, Burnt Sienna, Yellow Ochre, Titanium White. ➤➤

8 Apply an oil medium layer
I lay down a thin glaze of medium made from linseed oil, Turpenoid, and a small amount of pigment, starting from the background and working forward. The medium will allow the next layer of paint to flow smoothly over the surface.
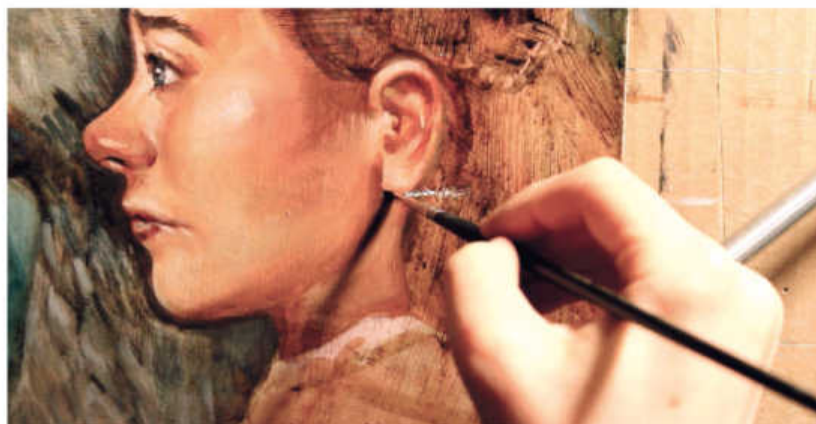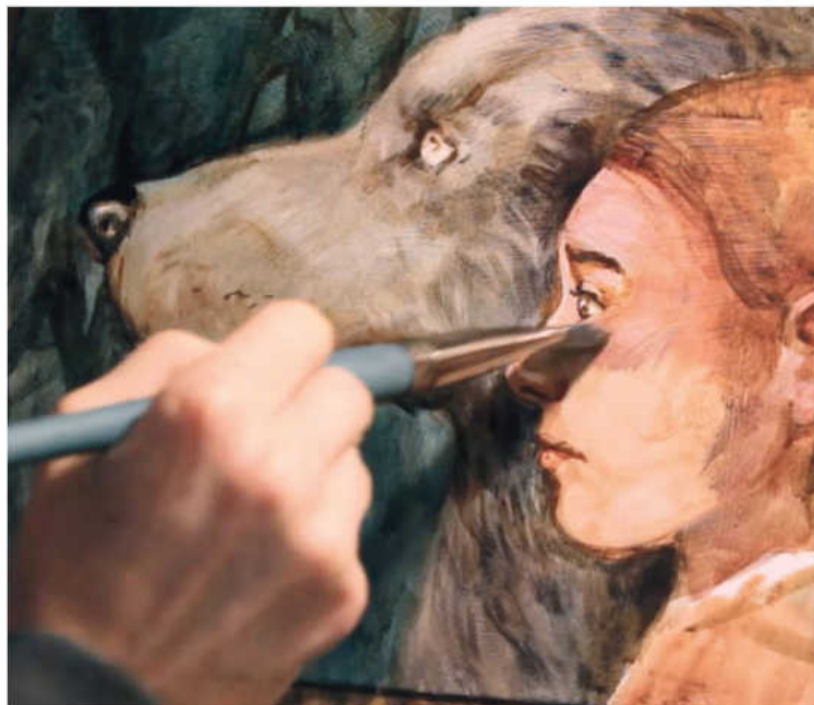
9 Paint an oil first coat
Working from general to specific, I start by laying down larger areas of colour, such as the dire wolf's fur or Arya's skin, then move to smaller details like lips, nostrils, and eyes. I focus on getting accurate colour.

10 Add the finishing touches
After the previous layer dries, I go back and add the darkest darks, and the brightest highlights. I normally add the darks as layered glazes, using dark pigments mixed with linseed oil, similar to using a Multiply layer in Photoshop.

ARTIST INSIGHT
KEEP OILS WET
Put your palette in the freezer to keep oils wet overnight.

Project

HOW TO PAINT AN ABSTRACT PORTRAIT

New York gallery artist ERIK JONES reveals how to mix traditional techniques and media to create unusual and striking art.

When I was learning the basic principles of visual art I studied graphic design, photography, apparel design, and of course painting, to name a few. I've never been a person to stick with one form of art for too long.

I guess my love for experimenting led to my fascination with mixed media. I find the process to be challenging and at times also frustrating – as if it's an unsolvable puzzle. Although that's what makes the work so rewarding when it's complete...

The most challenging part of using so many different mediums is understanding how they work together. I have botched my fair share of paintings rushing to get to the next stage when I should be waiting for things to dry or layering mediums in incorrect orders.

It's a trial and error process and only experience and patience will give you the results you want.

For a recent series of paintings, I dived into the world of fashion illustration, sci-fi art, and nonrepresentational/abstract art.

MATERIALS

PAINTS
■ Winsor & Newton Cotman Watercolours; Createx Airbrush Colors, Golden Acrylics; Behr Premium
■ Ultra Flat-medium base; DUO Aqua Water-Soluble Oil Golden, Matte Medium
PENCILS
■ Prismacolor Pencils; Prismacolor COL-Erase pencils
PASTELS
■ Caran d'Ache NeoColor II Water-Soluble Wax Pastels

The influences of said styles are probably apparent to most.

This new body of work doesn't focus on illustrating any specific conceptual ideas but rather explores different aesthetics through composition, form, and colour. I've always been very fond of bright colour palettes.

This most certainly stems from my childhood love for cartoons and more recently my passion for 60s illustration, primarily book covers and fashion ads. The work featured here uses colour and shapes,

GET STARTED WITH ACRYLICS
Inspired by Erik? To add painting with acrylics to your skillset, turn to page 84.

rather gratuitously, as a framing device. It's a way to move the eye around the painting, to engage the viewer and guide them where I want.

This tutorial explores these compositional elements. You will see I start my initial sketch by sculpting each individual shape with graphite.

I then layer watercolour with colour pencil and acrylics with water-soluble oils. I'll also show how different blending tools yield different results.

You may not be interested in abstract art, but as you are reading this, imagine how you can apply and experiment with these techniques to get your own unique results. Let's get started!

New York-based Erik graduated from Ringling College of Art and Design in 2007, where he studied Illustration. Erik's gallery work teeters on an invisible line bordering fashion and abstract art.

1 Start with a sketch

As you can see, I start with a very light pencil sketch. I fell in love with Col-Erase pencils when I was in college and haven't stopped sketching with them. I prefer to use light, bright colours like pinks or purples. Then I use a black pencil to refine the lines. The last step is scanning the sketch in and doing some digital clean-up.

BRUSH TIPS
KEEP MAKING MISTAKES!
Don't be afraid to make mistakes when painting. I've learned the most from my failures.
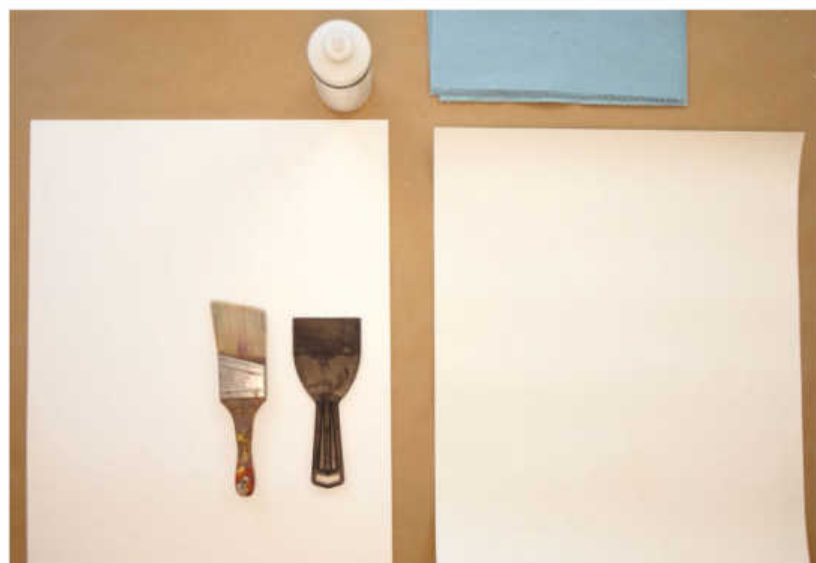
2 Move from paper to board

I use Sintra, a PVC archival board, to mount Rives BFK paper. I use Matte Medium and a palette knife to do this. I coat one side of the board with Matte Medium, rest the paper on top and smooth the paper to the board with a palette knife.

3 Transfer the drawing

For this piece I am using my projector in my studio with the lights off. I'll use a mid-tone grey Prismacolor pencil to lay the drawing out, trying to be as clean as possible because I work with mostly transparent mediums.

4 Begin the base colouring

I start off painting the skin and any red shapes with watercolour. Bright red is a very saturated colour and tends to be more transparent with acrylics; a base colour with watercolour will really make the red jump out of the painting.

5 Put down the wax
I establish a wax base with a white coloured pencil stick to make the colour which will go on top more smudge-able. I loosely put down a base skin tone and soften it up with a paper towel. I add different colours on top and blend with my fingers. I refine with a blending stump.

6 Refine and define
After establishing my mid-tones, I start refining the edges with shadows and highlights. I don't use a black pencil, just purples and shades of grey. This is also where I start to introduce lines, still only using the colour pencil.

7 Introduce oils
Now I apply water-soluble oils in very thin layers which dry quickly. White takes longer to dry so I buy light, bright colours with enough white already. Once it's dry I use water-soluble airbrush paint with a brush to get the eye shield colour. It's very transparent and dries smooth.

8 Fill in the shapes
I loosely start filling in all the shapes. I'm not so worried about staying in the lines at the moment. I'm using a 100 per cent acrylic Low-VOC house paint mixed with Matte Medium and a bit of Clear Gesso. This mixture enables you to draw on top of the acrylic once dried. It almost feels like paper again.

9 Tape off the edges

I tape off the edges of most of the shapes to clean them up. I also start to get a little creative and add little outlines of bright colours to give a bit more visual punch to the painting.
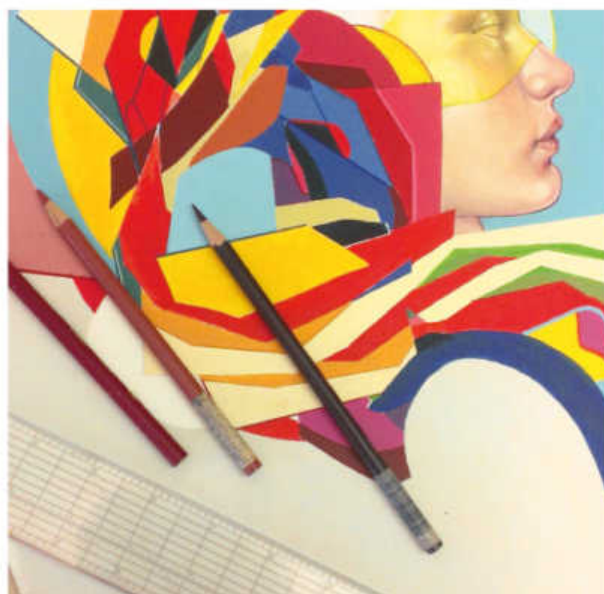
ARTIST INSIGHT

PAINTING TIPS

• Never layer acrylic paint on top of oil paint. This only works when everything is water-soluble.

• Using straight house paint out of the can is not recommended.

• In between layering mediums, spray a tiny bit of Workable Fix to help bind the mediums together.

• Try mixing colour pencil and water-soluble wax pastels together. Use the colour pencil first.

• Step away from your painting now and then. This will help you to get a better perspective on it.

• Ensure you sharpen your blending stump often. When wax builds up it's harder to use.

10 Paint the hair

The hair starts with colour pencil. I use several colours for this but I'm mostly focused on the colours' value relationship to each other. I want to use a few light colours and a few dark colours. I tie them all together by adding a layer of transparent acrylic on top of these highlights.

11 Make it dirty

I distress the colours by adding layers of transparent acrylic on top. Sometimes I'll wipe the colour away with a paper towel or paint roller once it's semi-dry, leaving remnants of the colour behind. I'm also using water-soluble wax pastels to mark up the painting, smudging the lines in with my finger or a wet paintbrush.
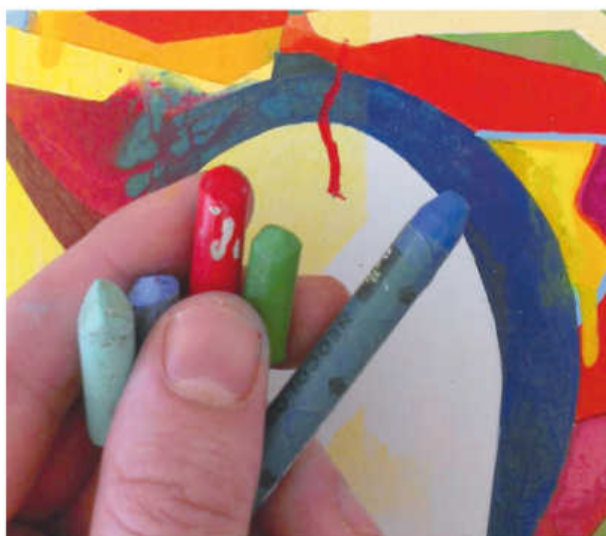
12 Add the final details

I use pencil for the eyebrow and acrylics for the parts I want to be more opaque, like the eyelashes and the tiny yellow spaces in the eyebrow which help define the line.

13 *Scanning*
I scan all my paintings in sections. This painting only requires four scans. (I have had paintings that needed 50 scans – my scanner is tiny!). When you scan each piece in, try to get them as straight as possible.
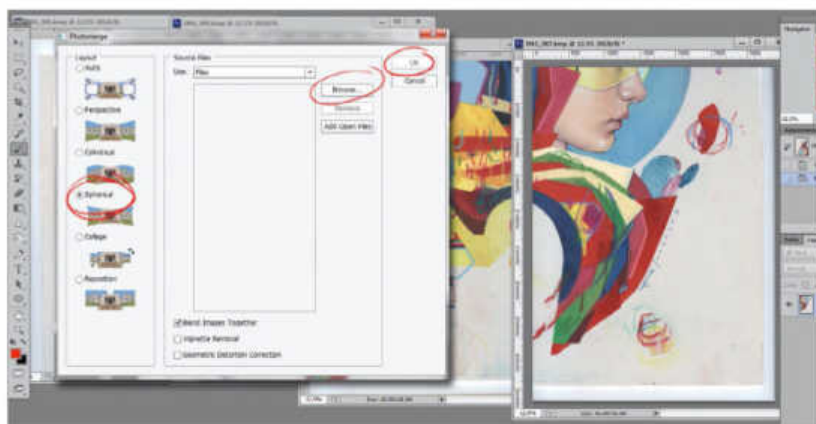
14 *Photomerge*
I now do some work on my image in Photoshop. To merge the tiles together, go to File, Automate, Photomerge. Select Spherical and click Browse. Select each tiled file you have saved and hit OK to merge them down and save them out for use.

BRUSH TIPS
PHOTOSHOP WORK
If working on your image in Photoshop, keep the original in front of you to match colours as well as you can.

15 *Colour correcting*
I usually always have to do some colour correcting. There are so many ways to do this. When you're dealing with a lot of specific little colours I recommend playing around with Color Range under the Select button. This will help you mask off similar colours. I use Hue/Saturation to change around the colours (among many other things).

16 *Colour matching*
This is tricky because your monitor is most likely not calibrated to 'real life'. Plus, colours will change under different lighting. Still, it always helps me to have the original in front of me to match colours as well as I can.

Core skills

PAINT A CLASSICALLY-INSPIRED SCENE

TRAN NGUYEN reveals how she captures the essence of a maiden's distress through the use of body language, dynamic elements and a rich blend of colours.

Therapeutic imagery – visuals that can be used as a psycho-therapeutic support vehicle in healing the soul – has always held a deep fascination for me. The capturing of complex human emotions such as dismay intrigues me, and this inspires me to illustrate the classic damsel in distress.

Now that I've decided on the subject, I want to create an interpretation of a damsel in distress that's different from how she's been traditionally depicted in the past.

When I find myself in a tight spot, my mind reacts chaotically. It's as if I'm submerged in a frenzy of emotions, each tearing my psyche in opposite directions.

BILLOWING DRESS

To convey this complex idea, I'll represent the damsel's woe through the billowing of her dress, as if she's been cast into a void of emptiness.

Her physical state will convey a feeling of weakness, as she fights to pull arrows out of her body.

MATERIALS

DRAWING
■ Prismacolor graphite pencil (HB, 2B), Bristol paper, Paper Mate Tuff Stuff, Eraser Stick, Tracing paper

PAINTING
■ Golden Fluid Acrylics Colors, Winsor & Newton watercolours, Prismacolor coloured pencils, Prismacolor Verithin pencils 12 Filbert, 6 Round, 1 Round, 8 Round and 1-inch Washer, Workable fixative, Paper towels, Rives BFK paper, Light table
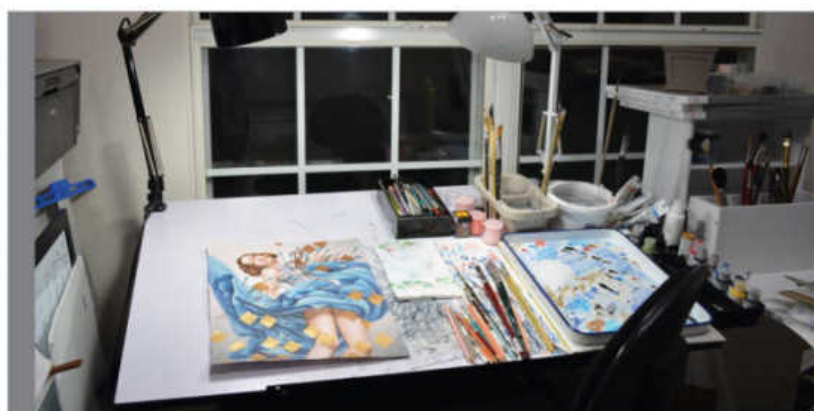
These arrows symbolise the many adversities that have brought on my character's state of vulnerability.

Keeping the face emotionless and letting the body and surrounding elements support the narrative should result in a more intriguing image.

My aim is for the viewer to be able to relate to this imagery and foster feelings of well-being from it.

It's similar to listening to a sad song when you're heartbroken. I want my audience to have a visceral response when they view it, to help them overcome whatever obstacle life has put in their way.

Tran is a freelance illustrator and gallery artist based in Georgia, US. She has exhibited with galleries in Seattle, New York City, Los Angeles and Barcelona. www.mynameistran.com

1 Conceptualising a distressed damsel

I start off with a very loose sketch that I refine into a tight line drawing after I'm happy with my composition. In my experience I find that clean lines are easier to transfer via my light table.

2 Tighten, transfer and tone

I scan, resize and print my sketch to the actual size of the painting. The drawing is transferred on to Rives BFK paper with a red Prismacolor Verithin. I then add a light glaze of coral pink as an undertone with a 1-inch filbert. This undertone will keep the colours harmonious with each another.

COLOUR TIP
OUTLINE ADVICE
I outline the edges of shapes and objects with a saturated colour rather than black. This gives the painting a sense of volume.

ARTIST INSIGHT
IMPROVE YOUR GLAZING METHODS

I prefer using Golden Fluid Acrylics Colors instead of its standard line of Heavy Body Colors, because they're better suited for glazing. The liquid colours are less viscous, and easier to mix and dilute. In addition, if I need the paint to dry slower, I'll mix in a small amount of golden's retarder to increase the drying time.

3 Colour-blocking whimsicality

I like to fill in all the parts of the painting with flat colour using a 6 Round brush before I begin any detailing. This helps me visualise what colours will work best and where values should be pushed or lifted.

4 A fair maiden

By diluting the paint with a lot of water, I'm able to create a soft gradient that's perfect for rendering fair skin complexions. For an even more subtle gradation, I use Winsor & Newton's watercolours. Here, I lay down six glazes of raw umber and cadmium red for her skin tone.

5 *Her courteous clothing*
I switch to a 1 round brush and paint in intricate floral patterns on her top. After this, I add in subtle folds of Payne's Grey, which gives the fabric some volume.
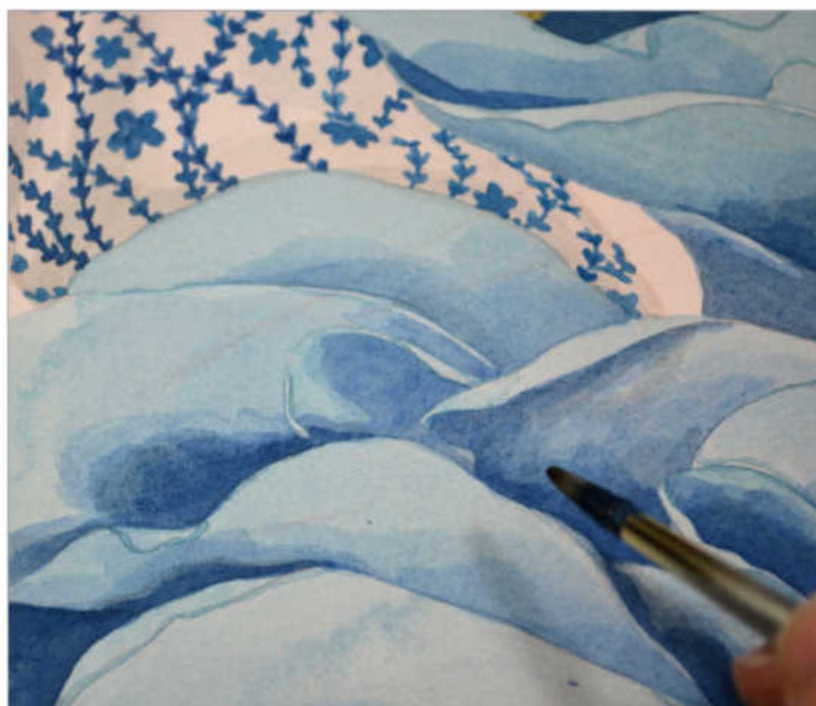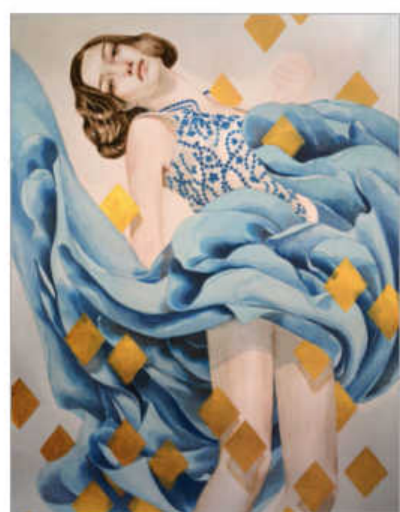
6 Billows of a deep-seated dress

To add depth to her dress, I focus on its lights and darks. I keep to the same light source and make sure that every fold casts a shadow. The rounded part of a fold will produce a highlight, which I render with a white coloured pencil.
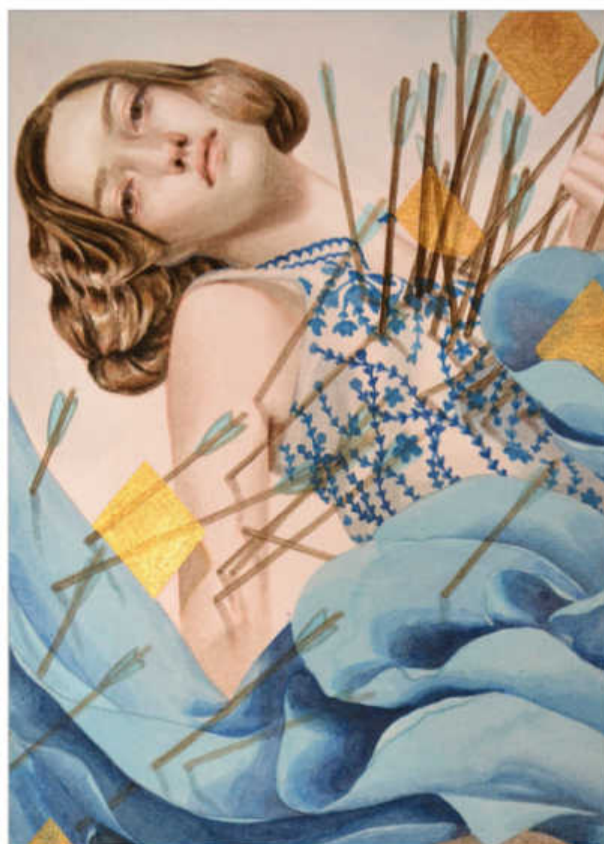
BRUSH TIP
WRIST TECHNIQUE
When painting, rotate your wrist. You'll utilise every angle of the brush and create a more fluid and organic stroke.

8 Her fixated gaze

Usually after 20-plus glazes, the paper tends to lose its tooth. This is when I spray it down with Blair's Workable Fixative in a well-ventilated area. After it dries, I go back in with another layer of coloured pencils and continue to push the shadows.

9 Arrows to her heart

My approach is to work on each component of the painting simultaneously. This helps me see how one area is working alongside another. Here, I lightly paint in the arrows so that I can quickly lift them if they're positioned wrong. I use the colour pencils over them to create cast shadows on her body and dress.


7 Even greater depth

Diluting acrylics can makes it difficult to produce deep values. To help push them, I go over the shadows in her dress with brown and blue Verithin pencils. What's so good about Verithins is that they react like watercolour-soluble pencils when you paint over them.

10 · Painting a billowing dress

Now that I have more tooth to my surface, I can add several glazes of brilliant blue to the dress to give it a fuller look.

BRUSH TIP
BUY THE BEST
Princeton Artist Brush Co.'s synthetic mongoose and red sable series feel natural and absorb more water for glazing.
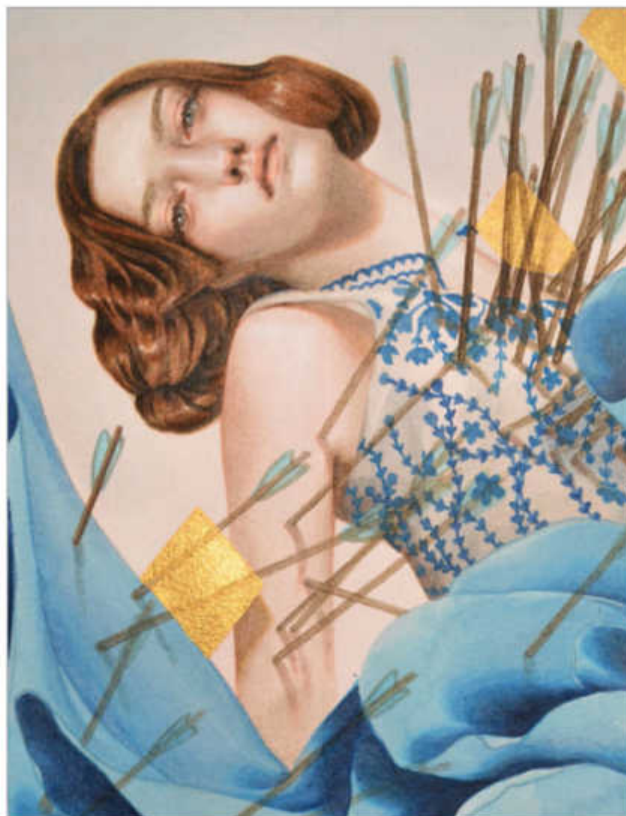
11 · A four-cornered affair

I'm usually careless when it comes to painting around the geometric shapes, because I know I can refine them later. I've found that painting cast shadows can help create cohesion between abstract and representational elements.
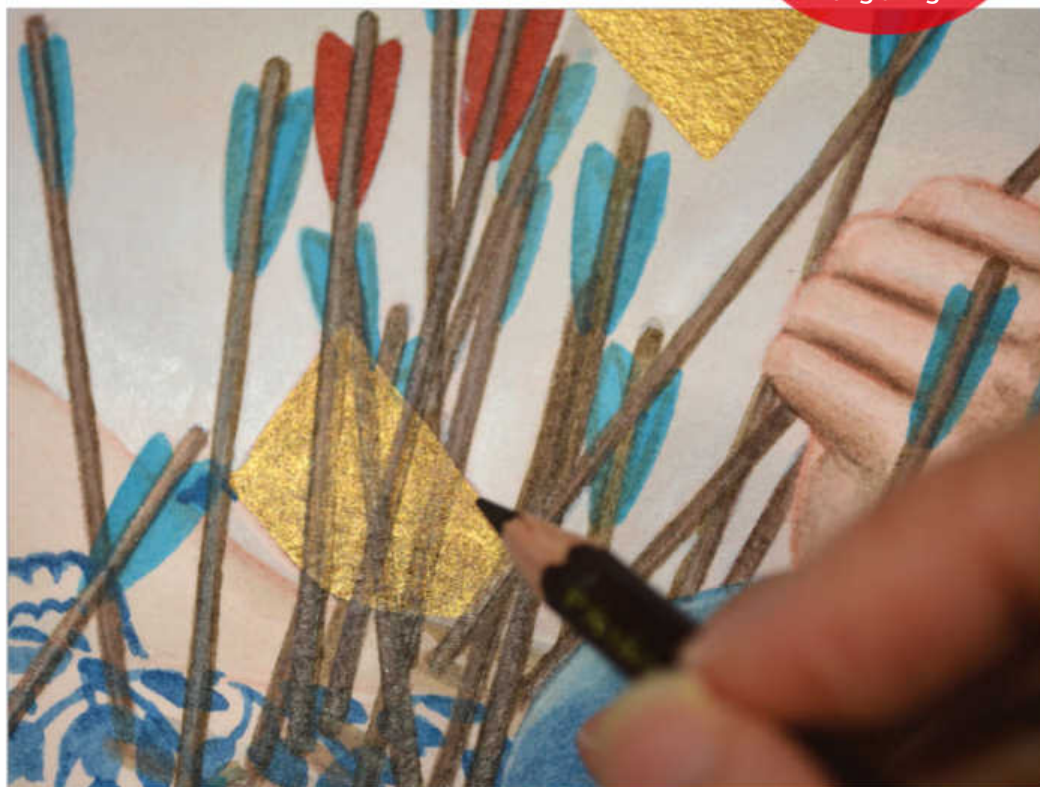
12 · The end of the fairy tale

Happy accidents will happen every so often, but when they don't, I remember to correct stray marks and overlapping issues. Here, I repaint the arrow's shaft over the gold diamonds. A lot of last-minute refinements such as adding more highlights to her hair takes place. Then I scan the work, edit it digitally and send it to the client.

Project

HOW TO PAINT FACES

EDWARD HOWARD demonstrates how he paints the human face and why precision is so important in communicating with the viewer.
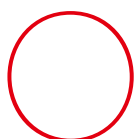
Our task as artists is daunting: we must communicate an entire story or moment in just one image. We must say so much with so little.

Eugéne Fromentin famously said that, "Art is the expression of the invisible by means of the visible." With that in mind, I believe that the depiction of the human face is the keystone in our communication of the invisible.

Visually, we immediately seek out the human face for emotional cues when we engage an image. This is evident when I look at a piece such as Illya Repin's Ivan the Terrible and His Son Ivan (1885); it's hard to miss how a well-executed face has the ability and power to carry an entire narrative.

The face is an intricate construct of semi-symmetrical peaks and valleys, flesh and muscle, wrapped upon and within a bone lattice, all working in concert to communicate human expression and emotion. The face is a truly amazing feat of evolutionary engineering, which is incredibly difficult to accurately produce.

We as artists must seamlessly merge each technical, topographic facial element until they become one harmonious emotional depiction to truly communicate with the viewer. If any element fails, if the proportions or the perspective are off just a little, then the viewer is lost.

Across the following pages, I take a look at how my piece entitled Rescue of the Last Turtle King began and my initial stages of preparation. After discussing the piece as a whole, I focus on the faces. I go through, step-by-step, the process of building the faces up so that they tell a story.

For me, depicting the face is the most difficult and most rewarding. There's nothing like getting it right, and there's nothing worse than getting it wrong. It's about practice. It's about observation. It's about patience. Use reference, constantly measure, and don't be afraid to start again. Every failure is a success because of the knowledge you gain.
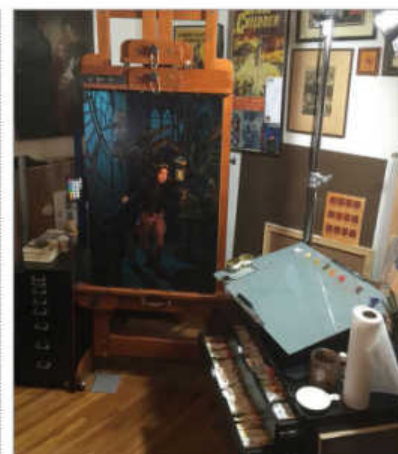
Edward is an artist based in Los Angeles. Since his debut in 2012, his work has been published in Spectrum 18-21. He has been selected to participate in the Main Show of IlluXCon 5, 6 and 7. His works can be found in collections across the country. To see more oil and digital works by Edward, visit www. efhoward.com.

Painting

1 Visualise the idea in a sketch

I always like to fill pages with small sketches – little ideas that pop into my head. Through sketching, I eventually stumble upon an idea that intrigues me, and I explore it further to see where I can take it.

2 Experiment using thumbnails

I begin with a series of thumbnails. These aren't tightly rendered images, just little blobs. I'm looking at composition, experimenting with lights and darks, and focusing only on the big shapes.

3 Put together the composition

I have my image and various elements selected. Now I need to place them in a way that's balanced and moves the viewer's eye. Using one of my photo reference shots I begin to sketch in different elements to see how they work as a whole. There's still plenty of time for changes, if I feel things aren't working..

4 Lay down a grid

I cover the board with a toned wash of pigment and turpentine. I want to kill the bright white of the board to better judge my values later on. I then transfer my image on to my board, using a traditional grid method and white chalk.

5 Start blocking-in

I cover the board with large blocks of colour. The only goal is to approximate the general values of the piece as a whole. I want to see how lights and darks are balanced. I squint my eyes to make sure these areas are working.

6 *Break-down the shapes*

I begin to break the blocks into the larger shapes, pushing and pulling to determine values. I don't want to get bogged down in one area. I keep moving over the piece so that I don't get stuck working on one area. If you're bothered by something, move on and come back later after you've completed that specific pass.

Painting

7 Focus on the face

After a few general passes, I begin my focus on the faces of the principle characters, breaking down the larger shapes even further. My image hinges on these faces, and their values and hues will essentially determine the quality of everything else.

8 Correct the proportions

I'm still breaking down the larger shapes and constantly checking to make sure that my shapes are correctly placed by measuring the distances to key features. I'm also beginning to consider light and how it's playing across the face.

9 Ensure the eyes are right

I begin my eye placement. I have all the general shapes in place, and I'm satisfied with where they are, proportionally. My goal is to lock in the eye placement. I'm not worried about rendering the eyes. I just want to have them solidly placed in their sockets.

10 Depict accurate-looking flesh

I lay in very rich layers of flesh, constantly blending and shaping. I want the flesh to be soft and blended, without hard lines or rigidity; flesh has to undulate over the muscle and bone. If I overwork the area it becomes muddy, but if I underwork it, it retains the sharpness from brush work. I have to find that perfect middle ground.

11 Check the facial elements

Working with the different features of the face, I begin making sure they are placed precisely and that they're sitting securely within the face, not just sitting on top of it. I'm always measuring and double-checking. I begin to focus on the quality of light hitting the face. I also tackle the nose, making sure the skin properly wraps around.

12 Maintain line quality

I'm still working on the face as a whole, but I'm focusing on line quality and general refinement. I soften the lines of the nose to make sure that they blend, helping to better unify the image. I'm always checking values, making small adjustments here and there.

13 Work on hair and final pass

I mix all the values I need for the hair and begin to loosely put colours down. I don't want them to blend – I just want the strokes to gently lay on top of each other. I begin my final pass of the face, inserting specular highlights and using glazes where I feel the value or hue needs to be adjusted.

14 Tackle the rest of the composition

Now that I have the faces in place, I'm happy to proceed with the introduction of other features of the scene. I progress element by element, making sure not to get too bogged down with one area. I continue the method of breaking down shapes into smaller forms.

15 Finish up

Now that I have everything in place I can step back and see what needs to be adjusted. Most of the adjustments are done with various glazes that help me push and pull value and colour.

ARTIST INSIGHT
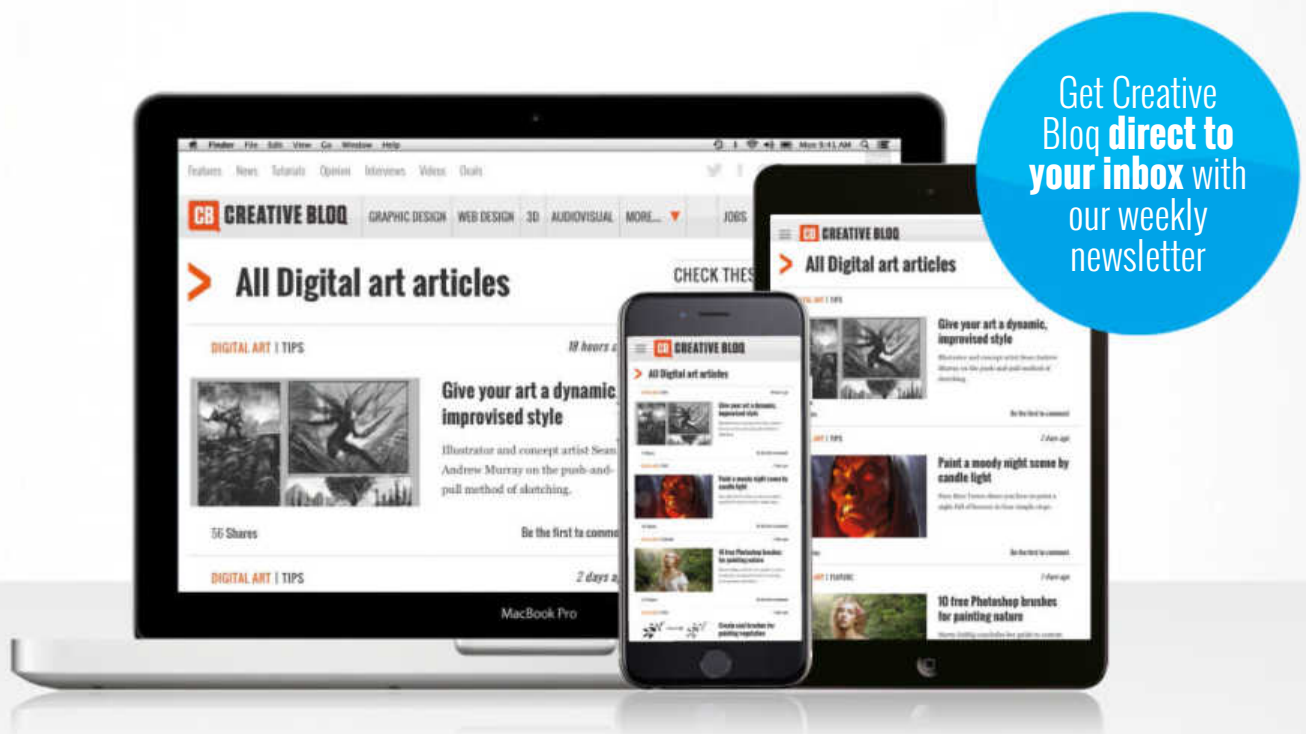*TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES*

As I've said before, there are amazing resources on the internet. Be sure and check out Google Art Project, Art Renewel Center and the National Trust Collections. These collections offer over a million images of works from museums and collections all over the globe. Take advantage of these incredibly valuable reference resources today!
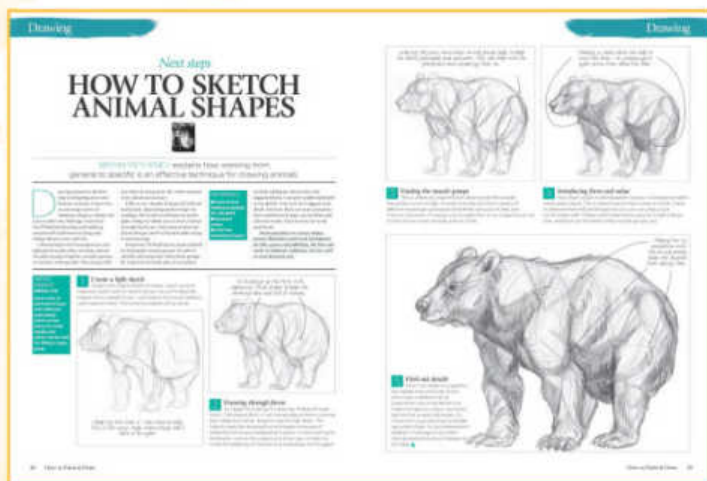
HOW TO
Paint & Draw

HOW TO
Paint & Draw

These **easy to follow** lessons will bring your art skills to the next level. Discover **new tools** for drawing and painting, put art theory into practice, and **learn the secrets** of world-class artists.

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Improve your skills and master the fundamentals of 2D and 3D shapes.

PAINTING PROJECTS
World-class artists walk through projects and share their secrets and techniques.

BUILD YOUR TOOLKIT
How to choose the correct brushes, pastels, pencils and materials for your art.

IN-DEPTH LESSONS
Put art theory into practice, from use of perspective to the rule of thirds.

ALL DISCIPLINES AND TECHNIQUES COVERED: PENCILS • **INK** • PASTELS • **OILS** • ACRYLICS • **GOUACHE** **WATERCOLOURS** • MIXED MEDIA • **SKETCHING** • SHADING • **WASHES** • COLOUR MIXING • **FACES** ANIMALS • **PORTRAITS** • PERSPECTIVE • **RULE OF THIRDS** • GOLDEN RATIO • **TOOLS** • MATERIALS